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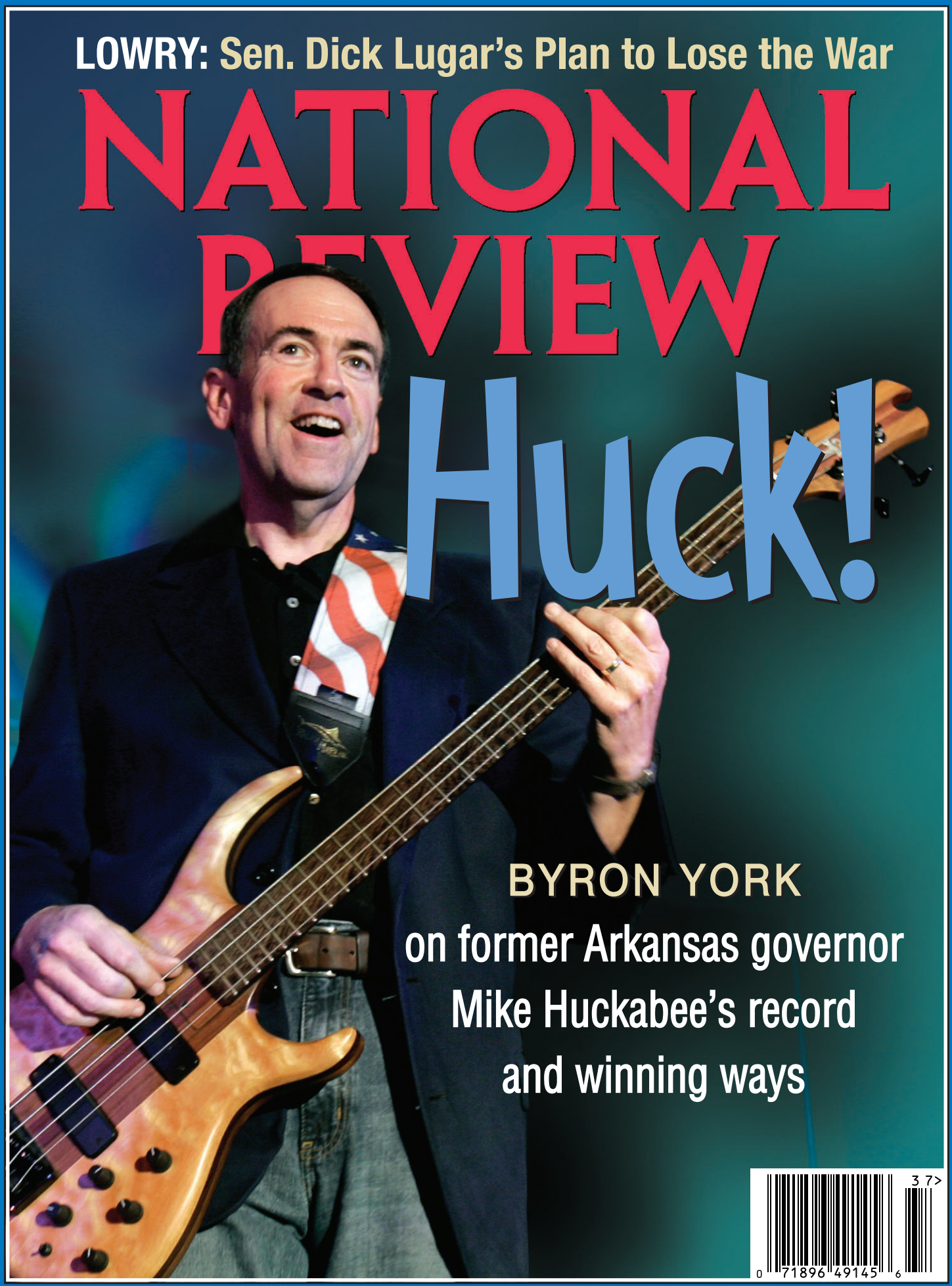
LOWRY: Sen. Dick Lugar's Plan to Lose the War

NATIONAL REVIEW



Huck!

BYRON YORK
on former Arkansas governor
Mike Huckabee's record
and winning ways

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NATIONAL REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007 VOL. LIX, NO. 16

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■ COVER STORY

Another Man from Hope

Page 32

Mike Huckabee came away a winner in the Iowa Republican straw poll, leaving Ames with new energy, new prominence, and new financial strength. But he also left with new questions. Like, who is this guy? Well, if voters ultimately decide to pay close attention to Huckabee, they'll find a complicated, and sometimes surprising, man. *By Byron York*

ARTICLES

17 When the Fix Is In *by Jonathan Foreman*
Fixers, interpreters, and reporting from Iraq.

18 The New Anbar *by Mario Loyola*
What the surge hath wrought.

22 LOST Is Right *by John O'Sullivan*
The U.S. should steer clear of the Law of the Sea treaty.

24 Uh-Oh *by David Freddoso*
Things aren't looking so hot for the Republicans in next year's House elections.

28 Movin' Our Way *by Kate O'Beirne*
Giuliani and Romney toughen up on immigration, but both still have problems . . .

30 For a Nation of Buttes *by Jonah Goldberg*
The glory of federalism.

32 Another Man from Hope *by Byron York*
Former governor Mike Huckabee shares some of Clinton's talents, but is definitely his own man.

40 When 'Thoughtful' Is Unthoughtful *by Richard Lowry*
Sen. Richard Lugar and the disastrous 'middle way' on Iraq.

43 Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda *by Ramesh Ponnuru*
Where the GOP went wrong.

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

48 Thou Shalt Not . . . —*Yuval Levin* . . . Shattered Tablets: Why We Ignore the Ten Commandments at Our Peril, *by David Klinghoffer*

49 The Known Unknowns—*Jim Manzi* . . . Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't, *by John R. Lott Jr.*

51 Definitive Dante—*Jeffrey Hart* . . . Paradiso, *by Dante, translated by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander*

52 Art: Seeds of Renewal—Roger Kimball reviews Jacob Collins.

54 Music: High Art & Low Taxes—Jay Nordlinger reports from the Salzburg Festival.

56 Film: Boys to Men—Ross Douthat reviews *Superbad*.

58 The Straggler: Fled Is That Music—The family piano haunts the Straggler family.

SECTIONS

2 Letters
4 The Week
46 The Long View
47 Help!
52 Books in Brief
56 Poetry
60 Happy Warrior

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letters to the editor

AIRBONE LASER: AN EXCHANGE

John J. Miller's "'Peace Through Light'" (August 13) transmits uncritically the Air Force's hype of the Airborne Laser, and hence misinforms. That Miller did not even understand the hype is shown by his statement that the ABL is supposed to destroy "a mock warhead" in 2009. Nonsense: Nobody has ever imagined it could destroy warheads. The stated mission is—as Miller states later without realizing the difference—shooting missile boosters soon after launch. He was told that the "primitive laser" that destroyed "a few missiles and drones in flight" a generation ago was "unreliable, and potentially hazardous"; that it was housed in an airplane that is "now warehoused at the Air Force Museum"; and that the Airborne Laser is its natural successor. More baloney. The megawatt laser that destroyed things beginning in 1978 at Capistrano, Calif., was more powerful, and more fully approximated an operational system, than anything the ABL program has produced. The main difference is that the earlier laser generator, designed to work in the vacuum of space, did not need the Rube Goldberg devices that the Air Force has been trying to perfect to create synthetic vacuums for each and every shot that the ABL would take. Miller repeats that the earlier laser was "bulky." If he was shown pictures, the people showing him may not have known that over 90 percent of the bulk was the equipment for simulating space. This is what the Air Force has been trying to shrink, in a dumb effort to avoid using the device in its natural environment. The Bush team, like the Clintonites, vetoed a space deployment out of deference to the Russians.

Putting the laser on an airplane in the atmosphere also means butting up against some other intractable laws of nature. Miller credits the claim that, by constantly coupling its shots with a low-power laser to measure the atmosphere's penetrability, the ABL's mirrors could push the beam through the air by compensating for its variable character. On what planet? In fact, any and all measurements cannot prepare a beam to overcome the turbulence that results from its own passage, because the ensuing corrections occur before or after that very brief passage, not during.

At the least, Miller might have asked his Air Force minders what they meant by "intercepting these missiles . . . while still over North Korean territory" with the ABL. Did they mean that a fleet of 747s with ABLs would fly figure eights 24/7/365 off the North Korean coast? How many would it take? How easy would it be for North Korean fighters to knock one down at the right time? What percentage of the U.S. Air Force would it take to defend them all the time? And if all those difficulties are there in the case of North Korea—the only place where the ABL could conceivably be useful—what does this say about its overall usefulness?

Finally, he might have asked, Would it not be simpler and much more effective to put such weapons into orbit?

Angelo M. Codevilla
Plymouth, Calif.

JOHN J. MILLER RESPONDS: Angelo M. Codevilla says that it's "nonsense" to claim that ABL would destroy warheads. This is about as petty as complaints come. Yes, ABL would aim its laser at missile boosters—but it would do so for the purpose of eliminating the warheads they carry. He goes on to claim that it's "baloney" to make a link between early laser research and ABL. Unfortunately for him, that's not just me talking—in interviews, both military and civilian personnel pointed me toward this work as a forerunner to ABL. Finally, he suggests that ABL can't work and that lasers belong in space. As for ABL, that's not what the people designing this defensive weapon think, and in about two years they'll have a chance to prove it. As for putting lasers in space, I'm onboard. But getting them up there may require the steppingstone of ABL, for both technical and political reasons.

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THE WEEK

■ Senator Vitter is doing well in the polls. Good news for Louisiana politicians; bad news for their wives.

■ Early in the last century, there was a genre of patriotic children's literature, in which Boy Scouts helped win the Great War. It walks among us today, whenever Barack Obama opines on foreign affairs. His latest insight: "We've got to get the job done [in Afghanistan] and that requires us to have enough troops so that we're not just air-raiding villages and killing civilians . . ." Does Obama really believe that's all we're doing there? Next to this guy, Hillary Clinton seems worldly-wise. And there lies a danger. Senator Clinton looks knowing because she isn't loose-lipped; and because she was in the White House, around foreign-policy types, for eight years. But experience, including secondhand experience, is not always experience of the right thing: Al-Qaeda battened in the Nineties, during her husband's presidency. Barack Obama actually made the point well in the Democrats' Des Moines debate: "We get into trouble when we engage in the sort of conventional thinking that has become the habit in Washington." Sometimes we do. Just because innocence is always inadequate, experience isn't always right.

■ Former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney won the Iowa straw poll by a wide margin over the runner-up, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee (31 percent to 18 percent). The large sums Romney spent on advertising and organizing had given him a big lead in the quadrennial ritual, a lead that Rudy Giuliani and John McCain were unwilling to challenge. Without the other top contenders in the contest, Romney's win means less than it might have—but it matters more than those who dismiss it allow. His impressive Iowa operation has been road-tested, he had millions to spend on his efforts because he has been a formidable fundraiser, and he proved his appeal through energetic, retail politicking. In addition to Iowa, Romney is ahead in New Hampshire and Nevada and he has moved up in South Carolina. His campaign strategy is to "win early" and he appears to have gotten a modest boost in the polls following his straw-poll victory lap. In politics, winning matters.

■ Huckabee's surprise second-place finish is getting him a bit more attention, including from us (see Byron York's take in this issue). He is thoughtful and funny enough that even journalists who cannot stand his anti-Darwinism like him. Or maybe they like his hostility to the free-market elements of the Republican party: He calls the Club for Growth the "Club for Greed," and favors trade barriers. Huckabee is probably right in thinking that his party's best shot is to try to appeal to downscale, socially conservative voters. But declaring war on economic conservatives will only limit his appeal in the GOP, as it should.

A Guantanamo Keats *(see page 12)*

■ "Paris is worth a Mass," said Henry of Navarre, when he foreswore his Protestant faith in order to capture the French throne at the end of the 16th century. Most French Catholics were pleased by his conversion, though François Ravaillac, a Catholic zealot, assassinated him in 1610. There are a lot of conservative Ravaillacs in this election cycle. Was Mayor Giuliani soft on illegal immigration? Was Governor Romney pro-choice? It is necessary to know how complete a conversion is. But the quest for perfect fidelity is self-defeating. Most of the founding editors of NATIONAL REVIEW, and all of the disciples (if greater things with less may be compared), were converts. Rats, like politicians, are right to abandon a sinking ship. Conservatism wants to be the thing that politicians swim toward.

■ Giuliani and Romney are scrapping over who has the toughest record on illegal immigration. Sen. Mel Martinez, chairman of the RNC, stepped in to say that neither candidate was being a "leader" the way John McCain is: "leadership" apparently being defined by Martinez to mean agreement with his failed bill for amnesty. But Martinez's ham-handedness does not mean that conservatives should be happy with the candidates' debate. They are accusing each other of flip-flopping: They *have* flip-flopped, and good for them. We hope Giuliani moves

ROMAN GENN

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The Week...

a little bit more, and closes the door to any amnesty until his enforcement measures have been shown to work. They are also taking silly potshots. Giuliani wanted illegal immigrants to cooperate with the police in fighting rape and murder, and telling them that the police were not going to get them deported if they were peaceable was a reasonable step—for which Romney is attacking him. Giuliani, meanwhile, is zinging Romney for not having somehow forced mayors in Massachusetts to refrain from declaring their jurisdictions to be "sanctuary cities." A contest over who can best make a symbol of his hostility to illegal immigrants is not likely to serve the interests either of the Republican party or of restrictionism.

■ The Department of Homeland Security announced that it would issue new regulations aimed at employers who receive "no match" letters from the Social Security Administration. Such letters are sent to businesses that file W-2 forms on which the name and Social Security number of an employee do not match. In most cases this means that the employee is an illegal alien. Employers who receive "no match" letters will now be required to contact the SSA and verify the status of their workers. "There will be some unhappy consequences for the economy out of doing this," said homeland-security secretary Michael Chertoff, announcing the new regulations. "We can be very sure that we let Congress understand the consequences of the choices that Congress makes." In other words: "You wanted border enforcement, and now you're going to get it good and hard." Chertoff's remarks invite one to ask whether the administration is truly committed to securing our borders, or is simply hoping that an anti-enforcement backlash will create a new opening for "comprehensive" reform. For now, though, we're just glad to see the president enforcing the law rather than advocating amnesty.

■ The U.S. Federal Reserve cut the rate at which it makes direct loans to banks, sending a signal to Wall Street that it is aware of the credit contraction that has hit global financial markets. At the same time, the Fed wisely refrained from lowering its target federal-funds rate, through which it controls monetary policy. Demagogic politicians (and frantic investors) have shown less self-control, and the inevitable pressure to "do something" is bound to intensify. The Fed should resist this pressure. For one thing, the current crisis is unlikely to affect the economy in any significant way. As that becomes clearer, the hysteria will subside. For another, it is necessary that those lenders, borrowers, and investors who created the sub-prime mortgage mess bear its consequences. What we are seeing now is a necessary market correction. Several years of poor lending and borrowing decisions in the sub-prime mortgage market have resulted in a large increase in the number of foreclosures this year. Accordingly, Wall Street is reevaluating the credit quality of billions of dollars' worth of mortgage-backed securities and making the necessary adjustments. It's a painful process, but a poorly thought-out policy that prevented the market from righting itself would only compound the damage.

■ A number of the second-tier Republican presidential candidates have made supportive comments about a national sales tax; the idea is the centerpiece of Huckabee's campaign. But none of the top-tier candidates is touching the issue—and for very good reasons. If the Republican nominee adopted the issue, he would quickly find that he was talking about very little else in the fall of 2008. There are too many possible lines of attack, and it would take too long to explain the issues. Voters understandably distrust politicians who say that they are going to impose a new tax on them but that they will come out ahead. If, against very steep odds, the sales tax became law, what would it accomplish? A 30 percent retail-sales tax—which is what proponents are suggesting—would cause massive evasion through wholesale purchases. That is why every country with a high sales tax has converted it into a value-added tax levied at every stage of production. This type of tax system tends to hide the cost of government and makes taxes easy to raise. The claim that the sales tax would abolish the IRS is also an exaggeration: There would still be an intrusive tax-collection regime, as there must be for the government to continue to raise trillions of dollars, as the sales-taxers say it would. All in all, there are more risks than rewards to the idea, which is why you will not be hearing about it next fall.

■ Senate Republicans should relish the confirmation fight over Leslie H. Southwick's nomination to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Last year the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the former Mississippi appellate judge for a district-court nomination (he would later take a leave from this post to serve as JAG officer in Iraq), and even the American Bar Association's evaluation committee unanimously gave him its highest rating ("well-qualified"). Harry Reid promised prompt action on the nominee. Then the smears began. The *New York Times* echoed unfair liberal complaints that Southwick's record displayed "insensitivity toward workers, consumers and people injured by corporations." In an editorial supporting Southwick's confirmation, the *Washington Post* defended him from the baseless attack, noting that the critics were mischaracterizing his decisions. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who sees Southwick as a "qualified, circumspect person," sided with Republicans when the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to report the nomination

Rove, The Next Day

Querulous as Banquo's ghost,
Karl Rove hangs around to roast
"Fatally flawed" Hillary,
Whose negative apogee
Dangles like a garter belt—
An affliction she was dealt
By an unkind Providence.
Shall we let the games commence?

—W. H. von Dreele

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—William Howell, Martin West, and Paul Peterson

The Moving to Opportunity Program (MTO)

How do children fare in school when the family moves to a less poor neighborhood?

Relocating poor families to less-poor neighborhoods may not be enough to improve academic achievement of the children in those families. Although it is important to recognize that the MTO program, begun in 1994 in five cities and continued through 1999, did enable many families to improve their lives, researchers expected that the move to a better neighborhood would beneficially affect the academic achievement of the children involved. Yet data from the five cities show no overall positive impact on children's learning. Why? Although quantitative data can give us an overview, they can also oversimplify how poor families make choices and what their lives are like. Poor mothers and their children juggle myriad extreme conditions, and schooling is not always on the top of the list. Poor families are not just wealthy families without a bankbook. Our interviews support integrated policies that target schooling in conjunction with housing, mental health services, and employment assistance.

—Stefanie DeLuca

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THE WEEK...

to the floor—where Democrats will now wage an indefensible campaign of vilification. Bring it on.

■ "I had a difficult year," Justice Stephen Breyer told the American Bar Association's annual meeting. "I was in dissent quite a lot, and I wasn't happy." You may recall similar reflections from Chief Justice Marshall, Justice Cardozo, and Justice Holmes. No? If Breyer is unhappy in his line of work, by all means let him find a new one. We're pretty sure we could come up with a replacement who would take to the job with enthusiasm.

■ José Padilla, the gang member turned jihadist, was convicted of terrorism conspiracy charges for his participation in a South Florida Qaeda support cell. The key piece of evidence against him was an application to attend a training camp in Afghanistan in 2000 (those jihadist bureaucrats: thorough as the Nazis). But Padilla is better known for his arrest in 2002, for plotting what attorney general John Ashcroft called a dirty-bomb attack, and his detention for three and a half years in a Navy brig as an

THE TRAVEL CHANNEL

Global Village People

I've become something of a foodie, which is perhaps why I've become addicted to cooking shows. Lately, I've found myself enjoying *No Reservations*, a TV series hosted by "bad-boy chef" Anthony Bourdain. In *No Reservations*, which appears on the Travel Channel, Bourdain visits far-off lands as a sort of heavy-drinking (former heroin-addict) gastronomical spelunker, offering wry observations about exotic foods and the cultures that produce them.

The author of numerous books, the most acclaimed being *Kitchen Confidential*, Bourdain is the sort of guy I think I'd like to drink whiskey with. We'd share a fondness for New York, I'd learn a lot about food, and, I suspect, we'd scream at each other about politics. Sounds like good times to me.

All that said, Bourdain is interesting for another reason: He epitomizes what might be called populist cosmopolitanism. Bourdain waxes eloquent about the nobility of immigrant kitchen workers, he extols the glories of city living (the book flap for *A Cook's Tour* says, "He lives—and always will live—in New York City"), and expresses culinary solidarity with the eating (and drinking) habits of the day laborer and the street-vendor gourmet. There's an element of shtick to it—we're talking TV after all—but it seems sincere at the same time.

Bourdain displays an amazing comfort with the cognitive dissonance at the heart of cosmopolitanism generally. Bourdain loves distinct, and often pristine, cultures that have managed to endure in the face of globalization: the quaint village in Vietnam, the Mexican street stalls hawking cheap, authentic fare, the Zen-like perfection of a Japanese sushi bar. He loathes globalization, and the fast-food industry that grows on it like mold. The man who has eaten a seal eyeball in the Arctic, a whole cobra in Vietnam, and a warthog rectum in Namibia says the most disgusting thing he has ever eaten is a Chicken McNugget. Okay, as I said, there's some shtick here. But fine: You have the hog rectum and I'll have the McNuggets.

At the same time, Bourdain is outspoken in his conviction that Americans who worry about the level of immigration are little more than provincial yahoos. He dedicates a whole episode to this point, blurring the distinctions between the American Southwest and Mexico and waxing poetic on the grand melting pot that is America. Our grand commercial republic is a vortex pulling people from all over the world into one grand bouillabaisse. In *A Cook's Tour*, he gets misty-eyed about Spanish farmers who haven't changed their ways in a century (thanks no doubt to government subsidies). But one senses that Bourdain would have nothing but contempt for American farmers unwilling to go with the flow.

In another episode it becomes clear what the problem is. Bourdain takes viewers on a tour of New York City itself, visiting the neighborhoods where the Russian doormen and Egyptian cabdrivers live and eat. And it becomes clear that what Bourdain loves about New York—and what I love about it—is its rich diversity of communities and opportunities. But here's the hitch: He seems to see the whole world this way. Vietnam, Mexico, and Russia are simply neighborhoods in the global village. And just as you would hate to see KFC crowd out the great pho restaurant in Little Saigon or the pierogi place in Little Odessa, Bourdain dreads the Americanization of the rest of the planet for similar reasons. Little room is made for the idea that maybe some of the quainter parts of the world could use a good deal more American-style churn (and hygiene) and that maybe some of the people who oppose relentless churn at home do so for the same reason he wants to curtail change abroad. The man who wants to see Vietnam stay Vietnamese is enlightened or exotic, but never provincial. The man who wants America to stay American is a boob.

In other words, he is a cosmopolitan nativist, believing that New York's values are America's values, and that the rest of the world should remain pristine and exotic—like Kinshasa or Brooklyn—for culinary safaris by urbane Manhattanites.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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THE WEEK...

enemy combatant, beyond the reach of the legal system. When his case was transferred to the courts, the dirty-bomb plot fell by the wayside. We should be glad to lock the murderous thug up for conspiring to commit terrorism, even as we were to imprison Al Capone on income-tax evasion. But we still lack a clear and compelling strategy for fighting enemy warriors on American soil. Let us hope it does not take another 9/11 to inspire one.

BEHROUZ MEHRI/AFP

■ Two reactions are appropriate to the imminent addition of Iran's Revolutionary Guard to the State Department's list of terrorist organizations. First, one should cheer: The Guard kills American troops and Iraqi civilians, is patron-in-chief to Hezbollah, and has a long history of exporting mayhem throughout the Middle East and beyond. The designation is both appropriate and overdue. Second, one should ask how much longer it will take the president to resolve the contradiction at the heart of his Iran policy. After September 11, in a moment of great strategic clarity, Bush said that the U.S. would not distinguish between terrorists and the governments that harbor them. Yet his administration has approached Iran—the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism—as though it were capable of being persuaded to adopt positions agreeable to liberal democracies. (Cf. "Iran, nuclear program, endless negotiations about.") Designating *just* the Revolutionary Guard perpetuates this fiction, by implying that there are good and bad factions within the Iranian government. In fact, the Guard takes its orders from the highest levels of the regime. Bush has taken a step in the right direction, but a step only.

■ Everyone knocks Iraqi politicians, for missing their benchmarks, going on vacation, and generally not being all we want them to be. But they take risks of which average politicians know nothing. They are always being kidnapped, maimed, murdered. And the same things happen to their wives and children and friends—routinely. We were reminded of this fact by the recent murder of two provincial governors: Mohammed Ali al-Hassani and Khalil Jalil Hamza. Yes, we are frustrated by Iraqi politicians. But we should remember, too, that they are—many of them—among the bravest people on earth. And good people everywhere should support them till the end.

■ Has U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Zalmay Khalilzad abandoned serious efforts to bring greater transparency and accountability to that troublesome body? And, if so, does that represent a change in the Bush administration's policy? The early signs are not encouraging. Last January, U.S. representative for U.N. management and reform Mark Wallace uncovered a significant lack of accountability in the U.N. Development Program's activities in North Korea. Numerous loopholes in the program left millions of U.N. development dollars vulnerable to Kim Jong Il's pilferage. When Khalilzad assumed the ambassadorship this spring, Wallace was in the process of pushing for reforms to correct these and other problems. Since then, Khalilzad has tried to rein Wallace in, and is attempting to defuse tensions between the U.S. and the U.N. by helping the UNDP make the scandal go away. State Department officials aver that the North Korea allegations remain a serious concern and that the administration's U.N. policy has not changed. If that's the case, Khalilzad needs to ratchet up the pressure on U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon to appoint a special investigator and do a full, system-wide audit of the UNDP's North Korea program.

■ Nobody strives harder to get your attention than the guy who wants to tell you something utterly banal. So it is with computer hackers, some number of whom managed to break into several websites belonging to U.N. agencies and post unauthorized messages on them. What were these cyber-geniuses so keen to tell the world? Something illuminating, interesting, original, or funny? No, only: "Hey Israel and Usa dont kill children and other people Peace for ever No war," and some similar lefty-babble injunctions. Reading them, in fact, one found oneself wondering if this really was a hacker attack. Perhaps it was just some Third World ambassador trying, not very competently, to post the General Assembly's next resolution of condemnation against the Great Satan and its Zionist lackeys.

■ There'll be no more skirlie in Scotland this summer, at least not during business hours. The National Health Service in Glasgow and Lothian has suspended the act of eating during the holy month of Ramadan. Doctors and health workers are not to lunch at their desks, where they may run the risk of insulting—tempting?—their fasting Muslim colleagues. (For who can resist the scent of minced and boiled sheep offal?) A more caring government might have mandated that the Scots eat haggis all hours of the day, which could only make fasting easier. Now, no order was given concerning the Jewish fast on Yom Kippur, also coming in September, but then that's not really the point. Making a society "Islam friendly" won't help Muslims fit in any better—and that's precisely the point. Gestures like this one mean that Scottish Muslims won't have to learn how to function in a pluralist society, but can continue their self-ordered segregation, living apart even as they live within—an imposition at best, and, as Glaswegians saw in June, ever a looming threat.

■ "Allah is a very beautiful word for God. Shouldn't we all say that from now on we will name God Allah?" So said Tiny Muskens, a Dutch Catholic bishop, who went on television recently to broadcast his novel idea, which he says could ease tensions between Holland's Christians and its unassimilated Muslims. There is no inherent theological problem with Muskens's idea: "Allah" is the Arabic term for God, and Christians living in Muslim-majority countries frequently use the word as such. It is the fawning nature of Muskens's suggestion that repels: Why would the Dutch use a word for God other than the Dutch term (which is, incidentally, *God*)?

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The Week...

■ Readers may remember Farfur, the adorable Mickey Mouse character who starred in a children's show on Hamas-owned Al Aqsa TV in the Gaza Strip. Following complaints that they were infringing on Disney's copyright, the show's producers had poor Farfur clubbed to death by an Israeli official after refusing to sell his land to Jews. Now a successor has shown up. Meet Nahoul, a gigantic jihadist bee. When his child co-host asks Nahoul how Al Aqsa Mosque (in Jerusalem) can be liberated from the Jews, Nahoul buzzes: "How? By means of morning prayers, blood, sacrifice, and pain, by means of martyrs, and with endurance. This is the key." Later in the show Nahoul goes to the Gaza zoo to torment the animals. As he swings a cat by the tail, peals of laughter are heard from the studio audience of Palestinian tots. PETA lodged a complaint, their spokesman saying: "Teaching people to respect the most defenseless of animals helps people respect each other." Yes, well, in the matter of respect for their fellow human beings, Palestinians have some way to go.

■ Every so often in the old days, the Communist East Germans shot individuals or even families attempting to cross the Iron Curtain into West Germany. One reliable estimate is that 780 freedom-seekers lost their lives in this way. It was always hard for the Communist party and its secret police and border guards to explain why they were murdering their own people, and they always maintained that there was no order to shoot. The border guards were so zealous, or perhaps nervous, that these incidents just happened. Specialists in the past had in fact uncovered orders to shoot, and one such document, dated October 1973, has turned up in Magdeburg, in the personal files of a Stasi (secret-police) sergeant: "Do not hesitate to use your firearm, not even when the border is breached in the company of women and children, which is a tactic the traitors have often used." Egon Krenz, the leader of East Germany when it finally collapsed, still pretends that there was no order to shoot, but this document proves otherwise, and its brutality has sent a shudder of memory and revulsion through Germany.

■ Parades and fireworks and displays of national pride in India and Pakistan mark 60 years of independence for both countries. The Indian subcontinent might have been the jewel in the British crown, but by 1947 the British were too war-weary and demoralized to take further care of it. Officials and lawyers who often had little or no knowledge of the area drew lines on maps that were misconceived, though perhaps unavoidable in the circumstances. Hindus and Muslims were to be separate. Some 10 million people were forced from their homes, and about one in ten of them were killed in atrocities never to be forgotten for their horror. The division of Kashmir has created one of the world's flashpoints. India and Pakistan have fought three bitter wars, and are now locked in a nuclear-armed standoff. Bangladesh, originally East Pakistan, in turn seized its independence from West Pakistan, an impossible 1,600 miles away. India is a democracy, and has a burgeoning middle class, but it still has hundreds of millions living on a dollar a day. Pakistan has been under military rule more often than not. But in spite of the communal and religious violence and warfare, the imperial legacy has its merits. The English language and law serve to good and, it is to be hoped, common purpose. There is a peace process. But for a resolution of these countries' differences we may have to wait another 60 years and more.

■ The Russians have claimed the North Pole. No, this was not a matter of Spetsnaz troops in Arctic camouflage storming Santa's workshop. It was, in fact, entirely symbolic, a Russian minisub planting a titanium flagpole on the sea bed at latitude 90° 00' 00". Actually establishing a proper legal claim to the Pole will involve years of haggling with dense legal bureaucracies bearing names like the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the International Seabed Authority, not to mention other parties (Canada, Norway, the U.S., Denmark) with competing claims. Even the symbolic act was not all it seemed. Footage of the flag-planting shown on Moscow TV turned out to include spliced-in scenes from the 1997 movie *Titanic*, and two members of the minisub's crew were foreign tourists who had paid $3 million apiece for the trip. Still, with the apparently unstoppable upward march of oil prices to $100 a barrel and beyond, and with global warming making for more open sea between the ice floes, the Arctic Ocean is beginning to look mighty appealing to oil and gas prospectors. Trade may follow that flag, too: A complete opening of the Northwest Passage would cut 2,500 miles off the journey from Europe to Asia. Santa is going to be having a lot of company up there.

■ When word of Karl Rove's resignation reached the *Seattle Times* during a daily news meeting, cheers erupted. Executive editor David Boardman sent a pair of memos to his staff: "That sort of expression is simply not appropriate for a newsroom. . . . As we head into a major political year, now's a good time to remember: Please keep your personal politics to yourself. . . . If we allowed our news meetings to evolve into a liberal latte klatch, I have no doubt that a pathological case of group-think would soon set in." When these tut-tuts appeared online, some of us-folk said, Aren't MSM news meetings liberal latte klatches already? And others of us said, Good riddance to objectivity, let everyone fly his true colors. NR is an ideological enterprise: honest in its reporting, honest in its bias. But we, and the rest of the world, depend—and will, for the foreseeable future, depend—on honest brokers gathering the news. It needs more than two memos to make the lesson stick, but it's a good lesson. Bravo Boardman.

■ *Poems from Guantánamo* is just that, a collection of 22 poems written by War on Terror detainees at the Guantanamo Bay facility, translated by U.S. government linguists, approved by the Pentagon, published by the University of Iowa Press, and—naturally!—given a full-page review in the *New York Times* Sunday book section. The reviewer could find no literary merit in the poems, but he blamed that on the Pentagon. "Imagine a volume of Osip Mandelstam's poetry released by

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World's Most Valuable Timepiece Disappears

Back in 1933, the single most important watch ever built was engineered for a quiet millionaire collector named Henry Graves. It took over three years and the most advanced horological technique to create the multifunction masterpiece. This one-of-a-kind watch was to become the most coveted piece in the collection of the Museum of Time near Chicago. Recently this ultra-rare innovation was auctioned off for the record price of $11,030,000 by Sotheby's to a secretive anonymous collector. Now the watch is locked away in a private vault in an unknown location. We believe that a classic like this should be available to true watch aficionados, so Stauer replicated the exact Graves design in the limited edition Graves '33.

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the Soviet government in 1938." The reviewer might have chosen a happier parallel. Nineteen thirty-eight was just six years after Walter Duranty got his Pulitzer prize for gushing over Stalin's achievements and denying the Ukrainian terror-famine. The *New York Times* of 1938 was no longer quite that pro-Soviet, but it was friendlier to Stalin and his work-'em-to-death labor camps then, than it is to George W. Bush and our terrorist-detention centers today, and would have given a better reception to any 1938 Soviet production than it has given to what the review calls the Pentagon's "public relations psych-out."

■ The film *September Dawn* purports to tell the story of the Mountain Meadows massacre of September 11, 1857, in which Mormon militiamen slaughtered over 120 people on a California-bound wagon train. It pins the blame on Brigham Young, Mormonism's prophet at the time: a contested point, to put it mildly. Hollywood doesn't often visit second-order events in American history (the Whiskey Rebellion? the Haymarket bombing?) unless it has an ax to grind. The ax of *September Dawn* is being sharpened for modern Mormonism. All religions make truth claims, and most of us accept at most only one set. But religions also make their own records in the world. Mormons haven't massacred anybody in a long time (nor have Mormons been lynched, the fate of founder Joseph Smith). At a time when we are actually fighting religious-based terrorists, Hollywood chooses to rake up the remote past of law-abiding Americans.

■ Michael Vick, star quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons, won't be playing for a while. Vick and three cronies were charged with betting on dogfights, and with torturing to death the dogs that did not fight well. When the cronies pleaded guilty, Vick threw in the towel. This is the latest tale of the celebrity athlete who believed he was a law unto himself. Moralizing over decadence is a tiresome stance, but there is real decadence, even as there is real morality. A century ago, George Santayana, the gay atheist Catholic Spanish philosopher, said the three things he liked best about the United States were football, jazz bands, and kindness. Number one and number three have parted ways.

■ Michael Deaver, Ronald Reagan's image-maker, was modest about his gifts. "The only thing I did was light him well," he liked to say. That is true—Reagan was the man in charge of his own persona, and his beliefs—but good lighting, and all the other details of presentation, are also important. Ironically Deaver is probably best known for his greatest blunder: picking the Bitburg cemetery, with its SS graves, for a 1985 ceremony of reconciliation featuring Reagan and West German chancellor Helmut Kohl. The media, ever eager to fight dead totalitarians, had a field day with that one. Deaver's wits were already clouded by alcoholism. In the last two decades of his life, he dried out and performed recovery-related good works. Dead, at age 69. R.I.P.

■ Brooke Astor was linked, by marriage, to a great swath of the history of New York money and social life. John Jacob Astor, fur trader and real-estate sharpie, is memorialized in a subway stop and the Astor Library (ancestor of the New York Public Library). The Four Hundred, an antique designation of the crème de la crème, were originally those who could fit in a 19th-century Mrs. Astor's ballroom. Our Mrs. Astor spent the second half of a centenarian's life in good works. Projects high and low benefited from her money, and her attention: for she made a point of seeing for herself where her charity went, always turned out in designer clothes and jewels. She established her regimen after some not-so-good times: Her first husband was a bum, numbers two and three (who were not) died in middle age. She wrote the last chapter of a type in great style. Dead, at 105. R.I.P.

POLITICS

Exit Strategist

No presidential aide in the modern era has had as wide-ranging a portfolio as Karl Rove. He was the president's top political adviser, as well as his top domestic policymaker. Some of the opprobrium he has received from the Left is the result of just this combination: Imagine what conservatives would have said if James Carville had moved into the Clinton White House in 1993 and run a lot of the show.

When Bush took office, conservatives were not sure what to think of Rove. More often than not, however, conservatives have ended up allied with Rove in intra-Republican debates. The leading Republican strategists of the 1990s accepted a liberal hegemony and moved cautiously within it. (Witness the 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns, in which Republican candidates acted as though gun owners and religious conservatives were liabilities.) Rove did not shy from a fight, and started a few.

Rove's critics call his boldness divisive. In particular, he is said to have politicized national security. The truth is that national security is the subject of important differences between the parties and that the parties have every right to appeal to the public to settle them. It is no more divisive for Republicans to run on homeland security than for Democrats to run against Abu Ghraib. Rove was no more divisive in 2002 and 2004 than Democrats were in 2006; he just won the first two times, which was his real offense.

Obviously, Rove did not achieve his stated desire to bring about a Republican realignment. But he did play a major part in winning two presidential elections that could easily have gone the other way. In 2000, the country was enjoying what it took to be peace and prosperity, even though an attack and a recession were just around the corner. Al Gore was a credible candidate who ran a serious campaign. The Bush campaign, for all of Rove's supposed instinct for division, initially tried to run an above-the-fray, post-ideological campaign. In September and October, however, Bush rallied conservatives—and pulled off an upset.

Rove's role in 2004 defies the caricature as well. He suppos-

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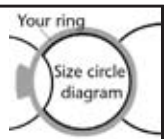

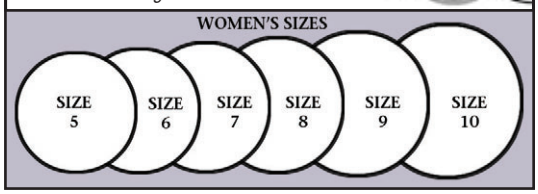

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edly cared only about his base. Yet Bush increased his margin among many groups that were not part of the base, from union households to Hispanics to Jews.

We have had serious differences with Rove, both tactical (we thought, for example, that Social Security reform should have been handled differently) and strategic (we thought he was dead wrong on immigration). But it is hard to think of any other Republican strategist who would have done better by conservatives in his post.

It would be an understatement to say that the Bush White House is diminished without him. His impending departure underscores that this administration is, for most intents, over. A new generation of conservatives will now have to learn from Rove's record, both its errors and its triumphs.

OBITUARY

Jeremiah Milbank Jr., R.I.P.

When the need for such a magazine as this one crystallized, General Eisenhower was president and his reelection was presumed. But there was dissatisfaction with the substance of Republican-establishment thought, which was dismissed by many as jejune and opportunistic, and there was a perceived need for a conservative alternative. If memory serves, the very first person I called upon to give a little corporate substance to National Review, Inc., was Jeremiah Milbank Jr.

The reason for this was in part personal. He had graduated from Yale with my brother John, and the friendship endured. Besides that, Jerry lived in Greenwich, Conn., and thus was my near neighbor. But never mind proximity, there was also the matter of his reputation. He was a conservative, which was what mattered, and also a philanthropist, in the tradition of his father and grandfather—but he kept his own company.

He lived with his enchanting, slightly zany wife, Andrea, and their four children, and he was active in various charitable enterprises, notably the International Center for the Disabled, which his father founded in 1917. But his generosity, however endlessly expressed, was not going to take over his life, and he also persevered with his family business in New York.

He was an unabashedly forthright conservative but a conventional citizen who cultivated his longtime attachment to the Republican party. He eventually became the chairman of the Republican National Finance Committee. Though he would express his misgivings about GOP policy, he never turned his back on the Republican establishment, so that when he was asked to help National Review get launched, he was cooperative without endorsing the kind of political singlemindedness more natural to his juniors.

He was a steadfast friend of this journal, on which he never made or even intimated demands of his own for institutional conformism. Although he opposed any idea of a third party, he managed to back third-party incursions, including James Buckley for senator and WFB for mayor, with discreet but effective encouragement. He viewed with quiet amusement some of the paradoxes with which, as a GOP conservative, he was required to live. But there can never have been anywhere a citizen of this country prouder of its legacy or more greatly determined to enhance it.

Jerry Milbank energetically and selflessly befriended the conservative alternative, in life and in politics. He lived modestly in several houses in Greenwich and nearby Rye, N.Y., until his retreat to Charlottesville, Va., where he died early in August, at age 87, stellar as a citizen, a father, a friend. To the evolution of this enterprise he was critical. We join his family and friends in mourning his death and acclaiming his devotion to the country that bred him, and that merited even his high standards of generosity and concern.

—WFB

OBITUARY

Timothy J. Wheeler, R.I.P.

Tim Wheeler wasn't a household name, even within the conservative movement. But a generation of NR readers took delight in his words, whether or not they knew the identity of their author. Tim was the king of the "offbeat paragraph"—the short items, sometimes political but often not, with which WFB, as editor, always began and ended the opening section of The Week.

"What, you ask, are the two greatest health problems among teenagers? Pregnancy and pimples, in that order. Now aren't you sorry you brought it up?"

"Three cosmonauts spent a record 238 days in the Salyut 7 space station, but were finally forced to return to the Soviet Union."

After the Mount St. Helens eruption: "I'm sorry I made an ash of myself. Lava, come back to me. Love, Helen."

And one of WFB's own favorites: "Iraq and the budget are as nothing compared to the firestorm following the retirement of maize, raw umber, lemon yellow, blue grey, violet blue, green blue, orange red, and orange and their replacement by vivid tangerine, wild strawberry, fuchsia, teal blue, cerulean, royal purple, jungle green, and dandelion, by the makers of Crayola crayons."

Tim had come to Bill's attention as a student journalist at the University of Wisconsin, where he was editor of *Insight & Outlook*—the first and one of the best conservative campus journals. He later founded a journal called *Rally*, sort of a triple-A farm team for National Review; many later-prominent conservative writers had their first pieces published in *Rally*.

Tim eventually moved to a farm in Indiana, from which he did editorial work for the Conservative Book Club and for Bill Rickenbacker's financial newsletter. He also produced a line of buttons and notepads of his own, with slogans like "Every joyous calorie cries Yea! to life," and "Ad Hoc Committee to Send the 20th Century Back to the Factory."

Tim seldom bylined, seldom spoke in public. But he was a steady sardonic libertarian presence at the Philadelphia Society and other right-wing gatherings, from which he will be sorely missed.

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A scene in Fallujah

■ AT WAR ■

When the Fix Is In

Fixers, interpreters, and reporting from Iraq

JONATHAN FOREMAN

A British colleague of mine was sent by his newspaper to Iraq in 2005, just before the July 7 bombings in London. After that attack, his editor asked him to canvass "ordinary Iraqis" for their reaction. The resulting article reported that all but one of the twelve Baghdadis my colleague spoke to were delighted that Londoners had been blown up. This seemed a surprisingly high proportion, so I asked him a few days later just who these interviewees were and how he'd found them.

With slight sheepishness, he admitted that all the Iraqis he'd canvassed were Sunni Arabs. In other words, his straw poll had been confined to members of a minority that makes up less than 25 percent of the Iraqi population—the same minority that dominated the country for 80 years, that feels humiliated by the empowerment of the Shiite-Kurd majority, and that forms the basis of the anti-coalition insurgency.

How had the British reporter come to meet these interviewees? It turned out that they had been selected by his interpreter and his "fixer." I asked him to tell me about these persons—good interpreters and fixers being costly and hard to find. Well, my colleague said with an enthusiastic smile, "Ahmed," his excellent fixer, had done sterling work for him since 2003 and before, when he had been employed by Saddam's ministry of information. As for his interpreter, "Muhammad"—also terrific—he'd been a colonel in the Republican Guard. Both, it hardly need be said, are Sunnis and former members of the Baath party.

That this journalist—otherwise honest and relatively unbiased—relied entirely on Sunni Arabs is bad enough. For a journalist to rely on Iraqis with such backgrounds is arguably like going to Germany in 1945 and hiring a former employee of Josef Goebbels as your fixer and a recently retired SS officer as your translator. Yet it had never occurred to my colleague that his choices were problematic, or that his employees might have an agenda of their own.

This is a pattern all too common among Western news organizations in Iraq. Sunni Arabs are vastly overrepresented among the employees of such organizations, which are becoming more and more dependent on local hires for actual shoe-leather reporting. Ask any producer or correspondent who has worked in Iraq what community his interpreter or fixer is from, and the answer will almost certainly be the Sunni Arabs.

One reason for this is that, long after 2003, major news organizations continued to rely on the fixers and translators they had hired in Iraq before the war began—including some staffers whose links with Saddam's regime, and its secret police, brought access. (At the height of the invasion, Western-media reliance on Saddam's flacks—official or not—sometimes led to embarrassing incidents, such as the insistence of the BBC's Andrew Gilligan that American forces had not reached Baghdad Airport even as Fox News was showing footage of U.S. tanks on the runway.)

Of course, one benefit of reliance on Iraqis with strong links to the old regime is access to insurgent spokesmen. Another is safety: You are less likely to be kidnapped or ambushed if you're paying more than $100 a day to an insurgent's brother.

One might ask how much this reliance on Sunnis affects media objectivity. Allow me to relate my own experience. My first driver-interpreter in Baghdad, in the spring of 2003, was a Christian—a former U.N. employee who took me to visit his large and delightful family in a tidy, very pro-coalition Christian enclave. Getting to know them was an emotionally powerful experience, and probably did influence my perspective, even though I knew they weren't necessarily "typical" Baghdadis. Most honest foreign reporters would admit that it's hard not to assimilate the point of view of the local driver/interpreter/fixer who gets you your scoops and on whom your life may depend.

I would argue that the reliance on Sunni Arabs has had a powerful if subtle effect on war reporting. Certainly it's not hard to find circumstantial evidence of pro-Sunni and anti-Shiite bias in the mainstream Western media. Most people who watch network news or read the major papers have no idea that almost every marketplace and mosque bomb that goes off in Iraq is an attack on Shiite civilians by Sunni terrorists. That is because the sectarian nature of these attacks generally goes unmen-

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY

Mr. Foreman has worked as a journalist on several continents and is the author of *The Pocket Book of Patriotism* (Sterling).

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tioned—they are presented as nondenominational "insurgent" bombs going off in crowded public places.

But when, after the destruction of Samarra's Golden Mosque in February 2006, Ayatollah Sistani could no longer hold back a people enraged by three years of violence against them and Shiite militias began to target Sunnis, sectarian identity suddenly became important in much of the reporting from Iraq. Now the stories were about "Shiite death squads" and incipient civil war. In other words, it was only when Shiites began to fight back that the bloodshed was deemed sectarian. Even now, if you look at the stories about ethnic cleansing, the victims profiled by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* tend to be Sunnis. The car bombs that slaughter scores or even hundreds of Shiite civilians are still just "insurgent" attacks, not attacks by Sunni death squads.

As if that weren't bad enough, the *Times* and other papers frequently stereotype the Shiite majority as primitive, misogynist, cinematorching tribals—unlike those nice, well-educated, secular Baathists so foolishly overthrown by the Bush administration. The pro-Sunni, anti-Shiite tilt is also evident in a reluctance to give voice to members of the majority populations (unless of course they are Sadrist extremists) or to the many brave Iraqis who are struggling to make a go of democratic government. Elected Iraqi leaders such as President Jalal Talabani and Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih (both Kurds) are all too often rejected when they want to place op-eds in major newspapers.

Another factor reinforcing the pro-Sunni bias may be the widespread employment of Palestinians by foreign news organizations in Iraq. Some of these are Iraqi-born Palestinians such as Khalid Hassan, the young *New York Times* reporter tragically murdered in July. Others are professional newsmen imported by U.S. and European organizations from elsewhere in the Middle East, including the West Bank (where many cameramen have been trained by Western media). It happens that all Muslim Palestinians are Sunni. Moreover, no group in Iraq was more loyal to Saddam Hussein than the Palestinians—and vice versa. The Palestinians were rewarded for their loyalty with privileges such as high-rise housing on and near Baghdad's then-prosperous Haifa Street—and with the hatred of much of the Iraqi people. Indeed, xenophobic Iraqis—most Iraqis, that is—generally hate Palestinians even more than they hate Kuwaitis and Egyptians.

This certainly does not mean that all Palestinians in the employ of Western news organizations in Iraq are hostile to the aspirations of Iraq's Shiite and Kurd majority, or regret the passing of the Saddam regime, or support the insurgency. Or that, if they do have such leanings, it necessarily distorts their work. But it is interesting that so many media organizations rely heavily on the one ethnic group that arguably has the most reason to resent the coalition and sympathize with the insurgents. As one Iraqi friend said to me bitterly, "Why don't they just go to Saudi and hire their reporters from the most extreme madrassas, or go to Damascus and get their reporters from Syrian intelligence?"

It is interesting that so many media organizations rely heavily on the one ethnic group that arguably has the most reason to resent the coalition.

The great irony is that the same organizations and professionals that don't look too hard at the backgrounds of their fixers and interpreters tend to wring their hands over the supposed bias-inducing effects of embedding reporters with the U.S. military. I wish I had a dollar for every time I've heard a mainstream-media editor worry that an embed's "dependence" on his hosts might compromise his "objectivity"—as if all foreign journalists didn't develop potentially unhealthy relationships, not just with translators and fixers, but with local journalists, government spokesmen, and other key sources.

The willingness of so many experienced Western reporters to be guided and gulled by the most anti-coalition and anti-democratic elements of Iraqi society is hard to forgive. In conjunction with other institutional failings, it may have influenced the progress of a war in which perceptions and morale are the key to victory and defeat. **NR**

■ AT WAR II

The New Anbar

What the surge hath wrought

MARIO LOYOLA

Anbar Province

To protect "operational security" I am not told about the trip until the night before. The two commanders of coalition forces in Anbar (mostly Marines) are to meet U.S. ambassador Ryan Crocker and presidential envoy Meghan O'Sullivan in Ramadi, the provincial capital, and I am to go with them. The Marines have planned a sightseeing tour of what was just recently the most feared insurgent stronghold in Iraq.

We take off from Camp Fallujah, coalition headquarters for Anbar, in a convoy of two Sea Stallion helicopters escorted by two Cobra attack helicopters. I ride in one of the Chinooks with Maj. Gen. Walter Gaskin; his deputy, Brig. Gen. John Allen, rides in the other. The flight up the Euphrates River takes about 30 minutes.

We are received on the ground in Ramadi by the burly and jovial governor of Anbar, Mamoun Sami Rashid—who has reputedly survived no fewer than 34 assassination attempts. After warm greetings, General Allen explains to the governor and a few other local leaders that the ambassador's visit is extremely important, as he brings with him O'Sullivan, who holds great sway with the president. He advises the Anbaris to be specific and candid in expressing their views; it's clear that he has gained their friendship and trust.

A few minutes later, Ambassador Crocker's party arrives from Baghdad in two Blackhawks. After hugs and handshakes, the delegation clambers into a

Mr. Loyola is a senior fellow of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He is currently embedded with the Marine Expeditionary Force in Anbar Province.

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Dr. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has won several teaching awards, including the Students' Undergraduate Teaching Award and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for Excellence in Teaching. Professor Ehrman has written or edited more than 15 books, including *The New York Times* bestseller, *Misquoting Jesus,* and *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium.*

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convoy of about a dozen armored vehicles and heads to downtown Ramadi.

As we drive through town I am amazed to see Iraqi police everywhere, sparsely reinforced by U.S. troops. When we stop at a market thronged with locals, the ambassador doesn't even bother to wear a flak jacket. Later in the day Allen tells me that, only last September, he couldn't fight his way to the center of Ramadi unless he was "prepared to kill a whole lot of people." Coalition forces on the move through Ramadi had to brave a constant barrage of gunfire, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades. Those ensconced in hardened positions took dozens of attacks every day; fatalities, too, were daily.

The decision to visit a market is significant. One State Department official who has spent most of the past year working in and around Ramadi tells me that, with reconstruction assistance, some 500 businesses have opened in recent months. The market teems with them. Ambassador Crocker, who speaks fluent Arabic, jokes with businessmen as he visits their shops. He compliments one man on his inventory, and asks whether an item was made in Syria. "No," answers the young Anbari. "It was imported—from China." Everyone starts laughing as the ambassador mutters, "Ah, I knew it." Notwithstanding the good cheer, dozens of soldiers keep a watchful eye on the crowd—and the rooftops. Exposed like this, we are sitting ducks. I too keep glancing at distant rooftops, not quite believing that the insurgents can't find a single sniper to exploit this opportunity.

The compound where the provincial government of Anbar sits is more sobering. Its walls still bear the scars of a violent insurgency—while the surrounding neighborhood, shattered and largely empty, stands in silent testimony to the withering firepower of the U.S. military. But even here there are signs of a city coming back to life: women walking from the market, young men on bicycles, security walls installed by the coalition and painted with the flag of the new Iraq.

At this time last year, nearly a battalion was stationed here, struggling to keep some semblance of provincial and city government together amidst constant firefights and assassinations. But as the violence has dwindled, so has the coalition's presence: The force was drawn down to a company, then to a platoon. Its principal mission now is to help train the Iraqi police, whose provincial headquarters are here.

While the official party gathers in the privacy of the governor's office, I meet with an Iraqi police lieutenant who speaks good English and agrees to be interviewed on camera (I am shooting a video of my trip to post on YouTube) so long as I don't show his face. I ask him when the local population turned against al-Qaeda. He says it all started when two tribal sheiks from Ramadi were assassinated in September 2006. This accords with what I have heard elsewhere: As al-Qaeda's position became increasingly desperate in 2006, it began murdering sheiks throughout Anbar in a campaign of intimidation. In time they were more hated than feared.

Training Iraqi police in Ramadi

JOHN MOORE/GETTY

But the news from the police officer is not all good. He says that, while the provincial police are "clean," the local Ramadi police are full of al-Qaeda. And he feels sure that, if the coalition leaves too soon, al-Qaeda would make a comeback. Once the Americans were no longer watching, chiefs at local police stations would go back to embezzling from the payroll (as they routinely did when he first joined the force)—and once the young recruits stopped getting paid they would go back to fighting for al-Qaeda. I ask what the solution is. "Get honest leadership for the stations," he says, "and clear al-Qaeda from the stations."

The official party's next stop is a meeting of the provincial council of Anbar. Just a few months ago, these representatives could not come to Ramadi for meetings without fear of being murdered. Now they are meeting in peace and safety with Crocker, O'Sullivan, and the two generals. This meeting includes almost a dozen "lineal sheiks" from the main Anbari tribes, with the U.S. ambassador at the head of the table as their guest. An Iraqi interpreter later tells me that the representatives thanked Crocker for the coalition's help in restoring security and in fighting al-Qaeda. They also complained of the need for better services, more money, more protection. And they made one thing plain above all: their mistrust of the Shiite-led central government, and their reliance on the U.S. to protect them from it.

Later, I ask the ambassador what the representatives told him about the presence of coalition forces in Anbar. He answers, "The tight partnership that General Gaskin and his forces have here with the people of Anbar, and especially with the tribes, is really the basis of all the good that we're doing."

Nowhere is this more evident than at the final stop of our daytrip, a meeting with members of the Ramadi municipal government. I speak with several State Department officials and their colleagues in the U.S. military who bring me up to speed on some of the more thrilling

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By John Fleming

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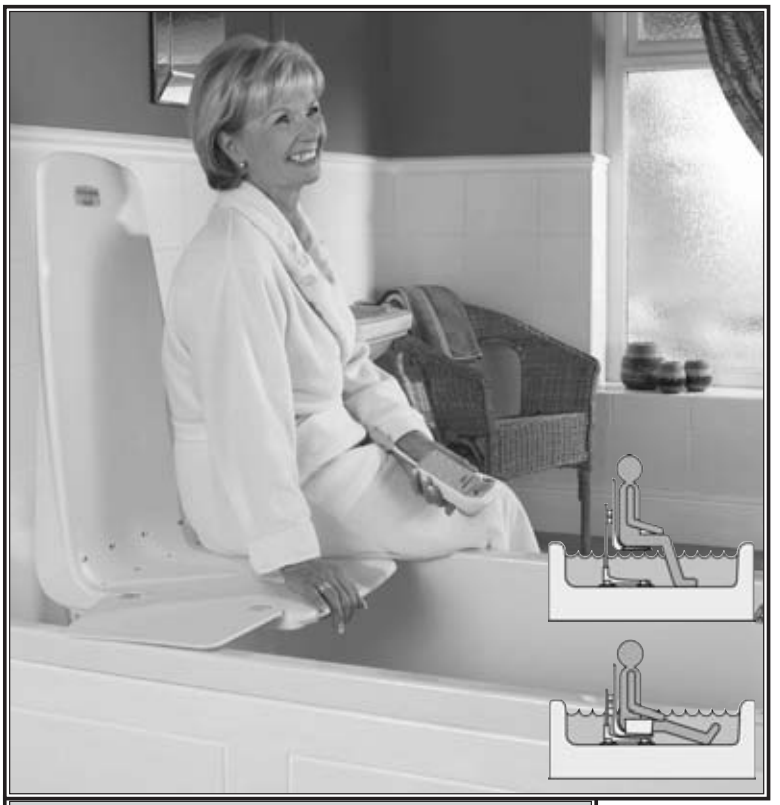

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aspects of "SWEAT": sewage, water, electricity, and trash. Such services are essential to winning the loyalty of the people, and are therefore central to an effective counterinsurgency. The U.S. officials report success across the board in providing these services. Unfortunately, Ramadi still lacks a proper municipal operating budget, so coalition military resources must fill the gaps. Again, I see progress—but again, the U.S. is, in one way or another, indispensable to it, at least for the moment.

General Allen offers a perfect coda to the day. "There is not a single person in this province who has lived a day under democracy," he says. "They're going to have to figure it out for themselves. But we're going to be standing right here with them." He means this as a promise.

Back in Washington, the Democratic majority fights to defeat that promise, and shatter the partnership of Americans and Iraqis that has brought peace to Anbar. May Congress come to its senses soon. Our friends in Iraq are in a death struggle against al-Qaeda, and we must help them win—for their sake, and ours. **NR**

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■ THE WORLD

LOST Is Right

The U.S. should steer clear of the Law of the Sea treaty

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

On June 29, 1982, President Reagan decided at a meeting of his National Security Council *not* to sign the Law of the Sea treaty. He opposed it "even without its seabed mining provisions," as he confided to his diary that night. Four months later, the president took a further step to deep-six the treaty. In October 1982, he sent Donald Rumsfeld abroad to persuade America's allies to join Washington in "rejecting the deep-sea mining provisions" of what is known as either UNCLOS (the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea) or, more brutally, LOST (the Law of the Sea).

Margaret Thatcher in Downing Street was a natural supporter for Reagan's position, but she was not his only foreign ally. In the Cold War climate of the early 1980s, many West Europeans were reluctant to sign on to a document that was saturated in socialist economic assumptions. It looked like one element in the larger Soviet–Third World project—the New International Economic Order—to transfer resources from the West to developing countries through U.N.-organized raw-material cartels.

For UNCLOS yoked together two very different things. First, it codified customary law on such matters as freedom of navigation and the extent of a nation's territorial waters. (The U.S. accepted this codification, with some modest reservations.) But second, it defined the mineral and other resources of the deep sea beyond territorial waters as "the common heritage of mankind" and established a complex international bureaucracy—the International Seabed Authority (ISA)—to regulate their exploitation. This was objectionable to Reagan's America on any number of grounds: It intruded on national sovereignty. It was tantamount to an international tax on mineral extraction. And it forced U.S. companies mining the seabed to transfer technology—perhaps militarily sensitive technology—to the ISA and to other countries.

Reagan's firmness paid off. UNCLOS languished until the end of the Cold War. But a bureaucratic initiative never really dies. Inspired by the post–Cold War optimism about the new efficacy of international institutions, most European states and the EU itself signed on to the treaty. In 1994, the Clinton administration went back to the negotiating table and signed a new side agreement that allegedly removed the problems with the seabed-mining provisions of UNCLOS. Sen. Jesse Helms thought otherwise and blocked consideration of the treaty. Since his retirement in 2003, however, UNCLOS has gained the support of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Bush administration, and the U.S. Navy. They now hope that the treaty can be quietly smuggled into ratification and law without too much in the way of hearings and hostile witnesses. And the obvious question is: Why?

Those who support UNCLOS, in particular the U.S. Navy, argue that it is essentially a deal: The U.S. gets valuable legal rights of navigation in return for ceding to the ISA some regulatory powers that, since the 1994 agreement, are economically modest and politically unthreatening.

An obvious retort to this is that the U.S. *already* enjoys navigation and other rights under customary international law and earlier conventions. We gain nothing new by signing the treaty. The Navy responds that we would be on stronger ground in asserting our rights against challenge if we were supported by ITLOS (the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea) in Hamburg. But signatories to UNCLOS are bound to respect our rights under customary law anyway. Small powers are unlikely to challenge those rights. If a great power were to do so, the U.S. Navy is the only force capable of enforcing them. And that is so whether or not we are signatories to UNCLOS.

Signing UNCLOS would probably change two things about navigation rights: We would likely be asked to enforce such rights for others as well as for ourselves; and we would be conceding a dangerous regulation of those rights to a tribunal

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drawn from nations not very friendly to the U.S.

Jeremy Rabkin, a former professor of government at Cornell, points to two such practical risks arising from ratification. If the U.S. Navy were to interdict a foreign vessel thought to be carrying nuclear contraband, it might find itself hauled before ITLOS and entangled in complex legalisms indefinitely. At the very least, the possibility of this would be a strong obstacle to the implementation of the Bush administration's Proliferation Security Initiative—the single most successful example of international preventive action against terrorism to date. On the other hand, if a small U.S. intelligence-gathering vessel operating near a country's twelve-mile limit were to be seized, then the U.S. could well have to reveal sensitive information about its intelligence methods in legal proceedings before ITLOS. In general, as Rabkin points out, the U.S.—which has formidable independent diplomatic and military resources—would be hobbled, not assisted, by membership of UNCLOS in pursuing its *existing* maritime and diplomatic rights. The fact that the U.S. Navy supports all this signifies not that it is strategically sensible but that the naval-officer class has been colonized by the legalist mentality of civilian law schools through the agency of the JAGs.

If our supposed legal gains from the treaty are in fact losses, what of the *acknowledged* economic losses? These are admittedly less severe than those proposed in 1982, but they are still unjustifiable and, worse, capable of expansion as the ISA gets into its stride. Thus, if the U.S. wished to drill or mine on the continental shelf beyond a 200-mile limit, it would have to provide a percentage of its revenue, rising from 1 to 7 percent annually, to the Deep Seabed Authority established by the ISA to superintend such commercial exploitation. As Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy has vainly tried to explain to U.S. corporations, a company wishing to mine the deep sea has an obligation to set aside an area where the ISA can develop its own mining with financial and technological assistance from its commercial rival. The ISA is itself obliged by its UNCLOS charter to ensure that the seabed resources are used for the general benefit of mankind. What this means in practice is that the ISA would provide economic assistance to what have been described as "developing countries which suffer serious adverse effects on their export earnings" from deep-sea-bed mining. In other words, nations and companies that engage in commercial mining must subsidize their rivals and competitors.

Much more ambitious schemes of redistribution and technology-transfer were originally intended, but the unfortunate fact that no companies actually did any mining reduced the ambitions of the treaty-writers. Even so, as Rabkin points out, the 1994 revision still has commitments to technology-transfer—and the power to make it a condition of granting mining licenses to signatory countries. The treaty also contains large and vague provisions for protecting the marine and littoral environments. The structure of UNCLOS means that bodies it has created, such as the ISA and ITLOS, are now in effect independent international agencies accountable only to each other. They enjoy both the taxing power in light disguise and the ability to expand the reach of their regulatory activities. And they have a claque of external supporters in nation-states that are content to have their own sovereignty limited provided that America's sovereignty is curbed too—even without Washington's consent.

Even though the U.S. has not ratified UNCLOS, the Chinese government exploited its technology-transfer provisions to obtain advanced sonar technology from U.S. companies. Britain *has* joined UNCLOS since Thatcher, with the result that the Irish government sought to compel Britain to close down a nuclear reactor on British soil on the grounds that it was adversely impacting the maritime environment and so violating the environmental features of UNCLOS. And if the U.S. actually does sign on, that will add federal judges to the long list of people seeking to exploit the treaty to constrain and direct America's elected policymakers.

All in all the deal sounds a little like Kingsley Amis's description of Britain's joining the European Union: Sure, we'll find it more difficult to protect our maritime rights under UNCLOS, and of course it will hinder our exploitation of seabed mining, but in return we'll get loss of sovereignty.

So why is the Bush administration doing it? **NR**

■ 2008

Uh-Oh

Things aren't looking so hot for the Republicans in next year's House elections

DAVID FREDDOSO

As Republicans entered the 2008 election cycle, Washington's conventional wisdom offered them three certainties. First, their odds were long for keeping the presidency—as bad as four-to-one, Newt Gingrich has said. And, second, Republicans could expect to lose a seat or two in the Senate, perhaps more.

Amidst these grim predictions, though, there was a consolation: Republicans could expect to gain seats in the House, even if they could not take back the House majority in the presidential year. Surely, after losing 30 seats in 2006, the only direction for Republicans was up—wasn't it?

Well, maybe not.

Having lost the fundraising advantage that comes from holding the majority, and with scandals and retirements racking up this summer, House Republicans find themselves in an increasingly dire situation. They remain confident about their ability to retake some House seats unlikely to remain Democratic for long—those vacated, for example, by scandal-tainted representatives Don Sherwood and Mark Foley in Pennsylvania and Florida, as well as the Houston-area seat of former majority leader Tom DeLay.

But potential Republican House take-backs start to look much less promising as one continues down the list. Seats in southern Minnesota, upstate New York, Pittsburgh, Connecticut, and southeast Iowa, among many others, will be difficult or simply impossible to reclaim, particularly if the sour national mood toward the Republican president persists. To make matters worse, the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), which last year bailed out several Republican candidates with over $81 million in independent expenditures,

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is lagging badly behind its Democratic counterpart, a grave departure from the norm. The NRCC held just $2 million in cash in July, compared with the DCCC's $19 million.

The House GOP reached the height of its strength under the current districting after the 2002 election. The 2004 election provided the evidence of this: Despite a fantastic national performance, Republicans would have actually lost House seats if not for a special round of redistricting in Texas in 2003. By 2006, there were relatively few House Democrats who could be plausible targets.

Now, Republicans have the same problem in reverse: The list of their own seats in peril remains long because they did not lose badly enough last year. They had scores of near-misses, and many of the dominoes that didn't fall last time are still wobbling.

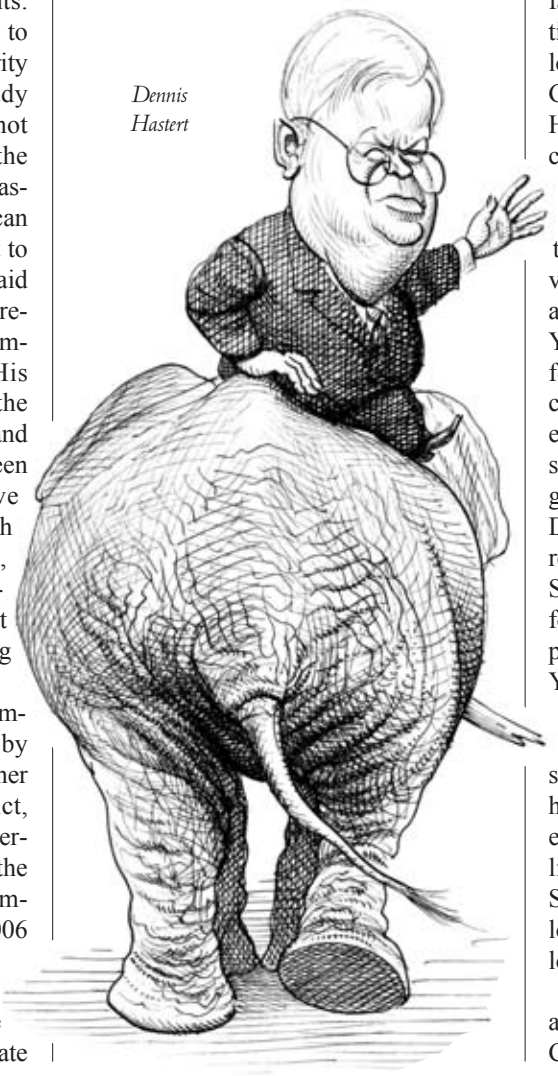
The story begins with retirements. Nearly all Democratic members plan to stick around and enjoy their new majority status. But Republicans have already begun to jump ship. Although it is not considered a likely takeover, even the defense of former Speaker Dennis Hastert's seat will require scarce Republican resources, now that he has chosen not to seek reelection. The same could be said of the Mississippi seat of retiring representative Chip Pickering, a safe incumbent had he chosen to run again. His district was originally drawn after the state lost a seat in the 2000 Census, and became the 2002 battleground between Pickering and former representative Ronnie Shows, a Democrat. Although Pickering won that race by 29 points, open-seat races are always more competitive—and Mississippi has not completely lost its affinity for electing conservative Democrats.

Rep. Deborah Pryce (R., Ohio), coming off a bruising election she won by only 1,100 votes, recently announced her retirement as well. This open district, which gave President Bush just 50 percent in 2004, is a genuine target for the Democrats, and Franklin County commissioner Mary Jo Kilroy, Pryce's 2006 challenger, is preparing another run.

Just outside Washington, there is no doubt that moderate representative Tom Davis (R., Va.) is eyeing the Senate seat of his fellow Republican, John Warner. Davis has been elected seven times in his evenly divided district, but Republicans admit that they have less than an even chance of keeping it, should he leave the House.

In addition to retirements—the list of which will grow before the end of 2007—Republicans face a new round of members caught up in scandals real or manufactured. These will find reelection difficult, perhaps choosing to retire instead.

In northeast Arizona, Rep. Rick Renzi probably will not stick around to defend the misshapen district that he first won in a close 2002 race. Ethics questions in the closing weeks of the 2006 election winnowed his take of the vote to 51 percent, and Renzi's family business was raided by federal agents this spring. Since then, Renzi has given up spots on three House committees. If he retires,



Dennis Hastert

ROMAN GENN

the sour national mood will make it difficult for the GOP to hang on to what was originally drawn to be a 50–50 congressional district—a district where Democrats have a slight registration advantage today.

In neighboring New Mexico, Rep. Heather Wilson has fended off tough challenges in every cycle since she came to the House, but her 900-vote margin of victory in 2006 over state attorney general Patricia Madrid may have been her ninth life. Congressional investigations of the Bush administration have ensnared her in the controversy over the firing of U.S. attorney David Iglesias, whom she allegedly pressured to investigate voter-fraud cases. Democrats will be sure to exploit this in 2008.

The California district of Rep. John Doolittle probably won't be competitive against a Democrat, unless he wins the nomination for reelection. Doolittle, facing pressure from a federal investigation into his relationship with imprisoned lobbyist Jack Abramoff, won his solidly GOP district by just 3 percent last year. He has already drawn two Republican challengers.

Alaska may have the most stable Republican congressional delegation in the nation—a combined 73 years of service between the formidable appropriators Sen. Ted Stevens and Rep. Don Young. But both are now subject to federal corruption investigations, which could weaken them or force them into early retirement. Alaska is not as red a state as some believe—unions still have great influence over elections—and Democrats will likely dedicate massive resources there in the event of House and Senate vacancies. Jake Metcalfe, the former chairman of the state Democratic party, has already announced against Young and is considered a serious candidate.

In addition to those tainted by scandal, other Republican congressmen have not carried their weight in recent elections, thus forcing the party to use limited resources to pull them through. Some of these are in serious danger of losing seats that Republicans should not lose.

Rep. Jean Schmidt (R., Ohio) inherited a solidly Republican district east of Cincinnati from Rob Portman, now the

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White House budget director. President Bush won 64 percent there in 2004, but in just one election cycle—and partly thanks to Schmidt's controversial style, which has made her all too famous—the district has become a swing seat. The congresswoman clung to it by 2,500 votes last year, helped along by a $316,000 infusion of independent expenditures by the NRCC.

Rep. Barbara Cubin (R., Wyo.) holds the at-large seat in one of the nation's most Republican states, but she underperformed so badly in 2006 that the NRCC had to give her $10,000 and spend a shocking $249,000 against her Democratic opponent, rancher Gary Trauner. Even with this help, she won by just 1,000 votes.

Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, in neighboring Colorado, required a $170,000 NRCC bailout to win 46 percent in a three-way race, even though hers is traditionally one of Colorado's safest Republican districts, in which President Bush won 58 percent in 2004.

Conservative freshman representatives Bill Sali of Idaho and Tim Walberg of Michigan may face trouble as well. The Club for Growth PAC made more than $441,000 in independent expenditures for Sali, and the NRCC spent over $600,000 on his race for an open seat in 2006. The conservative panhandle district that had given 69 percent of its vote to President Bush two years earlier gave Sali just 50 percent. Walberg defeated a hopelessly underfunded Democrat—an organic farmer who spent less than $50,000 on her race—with just 51 percent of the vote. Both congressmen posted lackluster fundraising numbers in the second quarter of this year.

The list of targets for the Democrats, then, is indeed long. And that goes without even counting some of last year's closest calls: Reps. Steve Chabot (R., Ohio), Jim Gerlach (R., Pa.), Vern Buchanan (R., Fla.), and Dave Reichert (R., Wash.). And what will happen next year to the three seats Republicans narrowly held in upstate New York if Hillary Clinton winds up on the presidential ballot?

Despite their swoon in 2006, Republicans are still clinging to so much shaky ground that they may face a 2008 rout rather than a rebound. **NR**

■ 2008 II

Movin' Our Way

Giuliani and Romney toughen up on immigration, but both still have problems . . .

KATE O'BEIRNE

The debate over immigration reform didn't end with the Senate defeat of President Bush's comprehensive plan. Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney are now touting their support for tough enforcement measures—while charging each other with having been lax on illegal immigration in the past. Their opposition to the Senate bill he championed prompted Sen. Mel Martinez (R., Fla.), the general chairman of the RNC, to scold them for not "leading on the tough issues." But it's tough to lead without followers, and the public clearly doesn't want to follow politicians heading down the path to amnesty.

Senator Martinez's stubborn support for a comprehensive reform that includes amnesty for illegal immigrants is at odds with a large majority of his party and its elected officials. Most Republican senators voted to block the reform he defends and a majority of House Republicans also rejected the plan. The Bush administration's new enforcement initiatives and the tough talk of GOP presidential contenders are clearly concessions to the public opinion that sank the Senate reform. Martinez praises John McCain as "courageous" for defying the will of the voters, but there is no virtue in dismissing informed, pragmatic public sentiment.

Recent polling by Rasmussen Reports finds broad support for cracking down on illegal immigration. The public thinks a reduction in illegal immigration should be the primary goal of reform, and only 16 percent believe the Senate legislation would achieve that goal. Only 28 percent think that legalizing the status of illegal aliens is very important, and only 12 percent think the federal government is doing enough to reduce illegal immigration.

Meanwhile, proposals to cut off federal funds to "sanctuary cities"—jurisdictions that refuse to enforce immigration laws—enjoy majority support. Three-quarters of Republicans back these measures. Given the overwhelming Republican sentiment so evident on the campaign trail, Romney has been blasting sanctuary policies; for his part, Giuliani pledges to end illegal immigration, and says he would require foreign visitors to carry ID cards. Both favor beefed-up border enforcement. Neither opposed *last* year's comprehensive immigration reform—but both objected to this year's version.

The top contenders' criticisms of each other have focused on their past positions. As mayor of New York, Giuliani defended his city's sanctuary policies—and candidate Giuliani makes no apologies for his unwillingness to enforce immigration laws against an illegal population of about 400,000 during his tenure. He argues that discouraging illegal aliens from reporting crimes, getting medical attention, or sending their children to school would have a negative effect on public health and safety.

As mayor, Giuliani also opposed denying non-emergency welfare benefits to illegal aliens. Although he now pledges to end illegal immigration, as recently as a year ago he was claiming that illegal aliens "are not really doing any damage to our society, might even be making vast contributions to it," and counseling that we "don't try to legislate against the inevitable forces of, you know, social movement and the economy because it isn't going to work." He still favors legalizing illegal aliens who would "go to the back of the line" before achieving citizenship.

When Romney criticized New York's sanctuary policies, Giuliani pointed out that Romney, as governor of Massachusetts, took no action against some "sanctuary cities" in his own state. Romney did veto a plan to allow in-state tuition for illegal aliens, opposed granting the illegals drivers' licenses, and encouraged state troopers to enforce immigration laws; a year ago, he favored deporting illegal aliens who committed crimes. Yet he also explained that "I don't believe in rounding up 11 million people and forcing them at gunpoint from our country"; and while he declared that "I don't believe in amnesty," he nonetheless believed that illegal aliens should be allowed to pursue a process that

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would lead to citizenship. He now *opposes* rewarding illegal behavior with legal status and, like Giuliani, backs increased border security and workplace enforcement.

Let's stipulate, then, that the two candidates' views on immigration have evolved; conservatives should welcome converts to the cause of crafting sensible reforms that secure our borders and enforce our current laws. But—because experience tells us that granting legal status to illegal aliens before we implement enforcement reforms will only encourage more illegal immigration—Giuliani's position in favor of amnesty hasn't evolved nearly enough. And Romney risks going too far in arguing that cities should be denied federal funds if they fail to enforce immigration laws against illegal aliens seeking police assistance, medical care, or education services. Here, too, Romney is on the side of public opinion: The frustration with defiant local officials who declare themselves "federal-law-free zones" is understandable. But years of federal neglect can't be easily remedied. It will be hard enough to implement some of the basic overdue reforms—e.g., the denial of drivers' licenses to illegals, tougher workplace enforcement, increased border security, and effective tracking of foreign visitors—that would reduce the number of illegals through attrition, without also trying to police all those who call 911 or get wheeled into an emergency room.

Giuliani argues that cooperation between reluctant local officials and overwhelmed federal authorities should focus on criminal illegal aliens. He recalls that, when he was mayor, federal authorities deported only a small number of the thousands of criminal aliens city officials reported to them. Newt Gingrich, in response to the recent execution-style killings of three college students in Newark by illegal aliens (one of whom was out on bail from a previous felony charge), proposes denying federal aid to any jurisdiction that refuses to check the immigration status of anyone arrested for a felony. In the absence of positive proof of legal status, there would be a presumption of illegality and the suspect would be detained. Public support for forcing an end to all sanctuary policies might be satisfied with a workable reform that prioritizes federal detention and deportation resources to protect the public from criminal aliens.

As for the Democrats, their candidates' support for amnesty and opposition to most enforcement measures puts them at odds with public opinion; but they might be able to count on the public's awakened interest in the immigration issue to dissipate, as it has in the past. Meanwhile, they hope to court Hispanic voters at the Republicans' expense. Republican candidates would be foolish to ignore the counsel of party strategists who fret about alienating a bloc of voters whose support in some states can be decisive. The challenge for Republicans is to avoid hyperbole while highlighting the importance of the issue; to promote workable reforms that tackle criminal aliens—and the magnets for illegal immigration—without demonizing millions. **NR**

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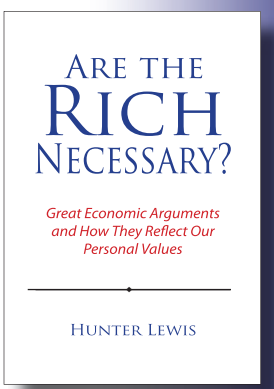

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■ CULTURE WATCH

For a Nation Of Buttes

The glory of federalism

JONAH GOLDBERG

We pulled into Butte, Montana, for lunch.

We're far enough along in our story for a brief aside: One of the great advantages to working from home is that you don't have to stay there. So, almost every summer my wife (who also works from home), our daughter, and our dog (a telecommuter of sorts himself) hit the road. It's a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your family and see the "flyover country" we pundits rarely visit save in our rhetoric. Moreover, if you drive cross-country you get to begin articles with sentences such as "We pulled into Butte, Montana, for lunch" (and then you get to write off lunch as a business expense).

Strangers in a strange land, we aimed for the historic downtown area and pulled over on Main Street, in front of an old building being renovated. On the front steps, a half-dozen construction workers were having lunch. As the Goldbergs decamped from the car, we struck up a conversation. "You drive all the way from Washington, D.C.?" one of them asked, spying our license plate.

"Yep," I answered.

"You drive all the way out here for Evel Knievel Days?" he asked.

"Uhh," I responded.

"Evel Knievel Days," I soon learned, is the storied annual festival in Butte (Knievel's birthplace) at which all things Knievel are celebrated. As we sought out guidance on where to dine—Pork Chop John's turned out to be a nice tip—the welcoming committee's leader proclaimed, "Butte's a great place! It's the only town in the whole country where there's no open-container law. You can drink a beer right out of the can in the open."

My first reaction: That is *so* cool.

But then the conservative ideologue's adrenaline kicked in. Oh, what a sorry state America is in! We've become so saturated with homogenizing political correctness that only poor little Butte can manage to keep a naked beer can above the floodwaters of the PC tide. Butte was once a famous mining boomtown, where any vice imaginable could be purchased in its historic red-light district. Now the men of Butte—and these were the manliest of men—nurtured the flame of free-spiritedness in the humble fact that they could drink a Bud without the Orwellian shroud of a brown paper bag.

I thought back to Tocqueville: "It must not be forgotten that it is especially dangerous to enslave men in the minor details of life. For my own part, I should be inclined to think freedom less necessary in great things than in little ones. . . . Subjection in minor affairs breaks out every day and is felt by the whole community indiscriminately. . . . It does not drive men to resistance, but it crosses them at every turn, till they are led to surrender the exercise of their own will."

Today, we're surrendering countless small, joyful liberties while obsessively worshipping a few large and mostly abstract ones. The typical citizen can burn the flag on his front lawn, but if he burns a pile of leaves the sheriff will pay him a visit. He can erect an altar to Mephistopheles in his driveway, but neither ol' Screwtape nor the ACLU can spare him from the righteous retribution of Leviathan's goons if he fails to sort his paper from his plastic.

As we walked back from Pork Chop John's, I surveyed the un-PC booths of Evel Knievel Days—the Smokeless Tobacco tent was particularly well-attended—and grew ever more enamored with my laborer *compadres*. Upon seeing them again, I thought of saying something like: "You happy few! Hold high your naked cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon, a symbol, like Lady Liberty's lantern, that the flame of freedom will never fully fade!" (Instead, we merely thanked them for the lunch advice and expressed our regret that we couldn't see the big motorcycle jump later that evening.)

As Butte faded in our rearview mirror, the soporific effects of my pork-chop sandwich kicked in, and so did the countering insulin of the conservative temperament. Is it *really* so terrible that some cities choose to enforce their open-container laws? Am I not a fan of Rudy Giuliani's New York, where he crushed the squeegee men and porn peddlers in the name of improving the quality of life? Indeed, don't I endorse locally enforced censorship? Given my druthers, wouldn't states and local communities be empowered to "enslave men," to use Tocqueville's colorful language, in many of the "minor details" of life?

And, with a heavy heart, my answer to all these questions was: Yes.

And herein lies the creative tension, or internal contradiction, or just plain hypocrisy, of both conservatism and "liberalism." Both camps pretend to be champions of liberty and promoters of security, but we qualify the liberty and security we have in mind differently. This, in a nutshell, is the essence of the culture war. Both sides seek to "impose morality" and "expand freedom," but we have different things in mind. Conservatives value economic liberty and moral security, while the liberal values economic security and moral liberty.

Conservatives—including yours truly—can sometimes get distracted by liberals' protestations that all they want to do is "the right thing" in this or that instance: No great ideological visions here, folks, move along. But the simple fact is that progressivism is more than a political program. It has its own—often severe—code of conduct and manners, usually called "political correctness." It has sumptuary laws delineating what you can eat, drive, and wear. Paul Tillich, the liberal theologian, defined religion as that system which addresses or satisfies man's "ultimate concerns"—and thus liberalism is indistinguishable from religion, politically speaking.

But so what? America has always been a cornucopia of religious and cultural minorities—and majorities—with rules about how to live and love and even how to vote. Baptists, Anabaptists, Leninists, Shakers, Quakers, Jews: The list goes on and on. Some of these groups wanted to impose their vision on everybody. And some, like the Shakers, were content to make lovely furniture instead of babies.

The Founding Fathers had a solution to this challenge: federalism. By leaving questions of how people should live up to localities, they ensured that the people

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themselves would sort these questions out. Some communities would choose to define liberty very narrowly, others would embrace cosmopolitanism or even debauchery. The great failure of the Founding was that such a system countenanced slavery and, later, Jim Crow. Liberals have used this fact ever since to throw the baby of federalism out with the bathwater of state-sanctioned bigotry. Despite its moral power, this is an argument more of convenience than of conviction, since liberals rarely object to local progressive "experimentation." Indeed, Louis Brandeis's "laboratories of democracy" idea wasn't really about federalism, so much as using the states the way Douglas MacArthur used "island hopping" in World War II: as a strategy for total victory. Brandeis wanted to use the states as incubators to leapfrog toward a national administrative state.

Instead, the states should be seen as *democratic* bulwarks against *national democracy*, mini-ecosystems within the larger one. In a nationalized democracy the majorities on the coasts get to decide how the minorities in the middle should live. In a federal system, local majorities get to decide democratically how to organize their lives. If you don't like how they do things in Colorado Springs or San Francisco, you have two options: fight to change things through the political process, or move someplace where more people share your values.

This grand compromise actually maximizes happiness insofar as it ensures more people get to live according to their worldviews. Beyond the few big things found in the Constitution and the relevant bits of the Ten Commandments it is simply impossible for the government in Washington to divine how every community should be structured. A progressive vegetarian community may want to ban the slaughtering of animals. Another community—say, Orthodox Jews—might view slaughtering animals as a sacred rite. At a recent rally for Ron Paul, according to blogger Garance Franke-Ruta, an activist explained that one woman joined the "freedom movement" because of a proposed law that would have banned her pet monkey: "She came to realize that freedom is more than just a pet monkey."

Well, is it? For some people owning a monkey might be the very definition of freedom. For others, it's a pointless public-health hazard. Either way, that a presidential campaign has become the venue for proselytizers of monkey freedom should tell you a lot about the mess we've made of the constitutional order. There is no correct answer, discernible through reason or revelation, about whether people should be free to own pet monkeys or to drink beer outside without a brown paper bag. It depends on where you live and how you and your neighbors want to live. The beauty of federalism is that it values real diversity over the superficial diversities of skin color and gender. And it makes driving across the country much more interesting. **NR**

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Marvin Olasky

Vice President of Academic Affairs

The King's College is pleased to announce the appointment of Marvin Olasky, Ph.D., as the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Olasky is a much sought after public intellectual. He developed the concept of compassionate conservatism and has advised numerous political leaders in Washington, including the president, on issues pertaining to social policy.

Dr. Olasky has been a professor at The University of Texas at Austin since 1983 where he will continue to teach. Over the past 24 years he has also been a Bradley Scholar at the Heritage Foundation, a visiting professor at Princeton University and a senior fellow of the Acton Institute and the Wilberforce Forum. He is also editor-in-chief of *WORLD* magazine, the fifth most-read newsweekly in the United States. Early in his career he worked at the *Boston Globe* and the Du Pont Company. He is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Michigan.

Dr. Olasky is the author of 20 books, including "The Religions Next Door," The Tragedy of American Compassion," "The American Leadership Tradition," "Fighting for Liberty and Virtue," "Compassionate Conservatism," and a novel, "Scimitar's Edge." He has also written numerous articles on journalism, history, poverty-fighting, religion, sports and other matters that have been published in academic journals and in newspapers and magazines like the *Wall Street Journal, New York Times* and *Fortune*.

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Another Man From Hope

Former governor Mike Huckabee shares some of Clinton's talents, but is definitely his own man

BYRON YORK

Des Moines, Iowa

MIKE HUCKABEE famously lost 110 pounds through a strict regime of diet and exercise, but on a visit to the Iowa State Fair he can't get away without trying the local specialty known as pork chop on a stick. It's not precisely what the name says—the stick is actually a protruding bone that makes a nice handle—but it's a thick, meaty chop, and it makes a pretty heavy snack on an August afternoon with the temperature near 100 degrees. Still, politics is politics, and Huckabee, standing with his wife Janet in the shade of a tree near the Iowa Pork Producers stand, smiles as he poses for photographers and tells everyone how delicious it is. "We don't believe in pork-barrel politics," Huckabee says, "but we do believe in pork."

It's the day before the Iowa state Republican straw poll, and the former governor of Arkansas is running hard. If he does well, he'll move a bit closer toward the first-tier contenders. If he finishes far back, he might be out of the race altogether. So he's pressing for every vote he can, telling people he doesn't have the money to pay their way to Ames, so if they get a chance to ride on another candidate's bus—well, they should take it, and vote for Huckabee. "If you're going to the straw poll tomorrow, remember, if you're going to vote for me, the voting's between ten and six," he announces during a stop-by at the WHO radio booth on the fair's main strip. "If you're not voting for me"—a slight pause here—"don't even show up!"

It works. The next day, Huckabee comes in a surprise second to Mitt Romney, who put millions of dollars into the contest and whose victory was a foregone conclusion. Of course the contest is flawed: National frontrunner Rudy Giuliani, candidate-to-be Fred Thompson, and the still-serious John McCain all skipped the event. But the straw poll is the first time actual voters express an actual preference, and Huckabee comes away a winner, leaving Ames with new energy, new prominence, and new financial strength.

But he also leaves with new questions. Like, who is this guy?

Taking a break from campaigning at the fair, Huckabee ducks into his campaign's sleek black bus to meet me for a talk. Going through the issues that will determine the winner of the Republican nomination—the war, immigration, taxes, the economy, the courts, abortion—Huckabee emerges as an amalgam of conservative principles, pragmatism, religious faith, and solid executive talent. He speaks at length about his record in Arkansas, not only on the big issues but also on a bizarre episode—the case of a violent criminal Huckabee helped free, only to see him commit a murder—that will surely receive scrutiny should he continue to move ahead in the GOP race. If voters ultimately decide to pay close attention to Mike Huckabee, they'll find a complicated, and sometimes surprising, man.

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Black Market Baldness Cure?

If you'd love to start growing your own hair back- thick, luxurious and healthy- then this will be the most life-changing message you'll ever read.

My name is Mike Gregory. I'm 59 years old and I used to be as bald as the palm of your hand. But now my own hair is growing back like weeds on a pile of manure. You can do the same. Here's what I discovered…

European scientists were doing research on skin cancer using white mice. Each morning their skin was cleansed with a special detergent. After several weeks- the scientists noticed something amazing.

The mice seemed to be growing more fur. And not just short, little mouse fur either. Super fur! This stuff was thick and long. Like a mink pelt. Could it have been the detergent?

Scientifically Proven

The scientists did a controlled, double-blind study on several hundred bald men. Each morning half the group got a small dab of this detergent rubbed into their bald scalps. The other half got a small dab of a placebo rubbed into their bald scalps. In six weeks, new hair began to sprout on the first group's bald heads. After a year- 90% of these subjects were growing their own hair back!

I know what you're thinking…"So why can't I just buy this stuff at the drugstore?"

That's where the black market angle comes in. The FDA has approved this magic substance as a food additive and a surfactant only- not a baldness treatment. You'd be arrested and jailed if you tried to market it as a baldness remedy. You know how brutal these guys can be.

But there's no law against telling people what this stuff is and where to get it yourself.

So I wrote a little book called, "Black Market Baldness Cure?" It gives you the whole story. How it works, why it works and where you can get your hands on as much as you need- real cheap too. Incredibly, a ten year supply will run you less than twenty bucks!

Safe As Mother's Milk

But is it safe? It's a food additive for god's sake. If you eat ice cream, salad dressing or mayo- you've unknowingly consumed the same stuff that can grow hair on a completely bald head! So yeah- it's quite harmless.

And it works better than those other baldness treatments that can have dangerous side effects. And a heck of a lot cheaper. You'll easily spend $100.00 or more per month on most of those other "remedies".

But here's the kicker- It doesn't work on everyone. Why? I don't know. But ten percent of guys just don't respond to this treatment.

With my guarantee- it doesn't matter. Go ahead- skip ahead and read the guarantee. I'll wait…

No B.S.

OK- so you see I'm not fooling around here. This is serious business and I won't waste your time or money or ask you to do something dangerous.

Here's a short list of other guys who have used my secret to successfully grow back their hair…

The conductor of a symphony orchestra, 8 homicide detectives, an assistant chief of police, 15 dermatologists, 2 dentists, a district attorney, the head of a county health department, an NFL scout and numerous newspaper, television and radio personalities and many Hollywood celebrities. And there's thousands more. You get the idea.

There's even a United States Patent for this material. I've included a copy in the book.

So here's what this little volume will do for you...

- You will grow your own hair back- starting in about 6 weeks
- Your results are absolutely guaranteed- I take all risk
- No hormones are involved
- No surgery is involved
- No hair weaves
- No toupees
- No wigs
- No sexual side effects
- You will look like a young man again!
- Works equally well for women who have thinning hair

"Perform Like A Young Stud Again" Free Bonus

Order today and I'll send you this free bonus report, "The Secret To The No B.S. One Hour Flag Pole Erection!". Most guys don't know about this stuff either- but it's GUARANTEED to give you a steel pipe erection within 10 minutes that'll last a solid hour. It's safe- it doesn't have any side effects like those pills- and it completely eliminates performance anxiety.

Because it works automatically. You don't even have to think about it! Just have the time of your life! You'll be legendary as a "60 minute man" and astonish your woman in bed. (My girlfriend calls me Mike Marvel). But be careful- you may ruin her for other men forever.

But you gotta get it from a doctor who specializes in this area. I'll give you all the facts you need and all the doctor contact info too- no sweat. Go in for just one visit and get refills by mail from then on. And nobody will know what you're up to. Sweet.

This free bonus report is guaranteed to jack up your sex life to stunning proportions. If it doesn't work for you- you're dead! And it's yours to keep even if you decide to return the "Black Market" book for a complete refund as stated in the guarantee.

Here's why you can feel confident you aren't risking a single penny…

Lifetime "I Pay For Everything" Guarantee

Use the secret in "Black Market Baldness Cure?" for as long as you want. Order the secret ingredient from the list of supply houses I've provided and give it a good test. If you don't agree that you are growing your own hair back, just send the book back anytime. Take a year, five years, ten years. Send it back anytime in your lifetime and I'll cheerfully refund every penny of your purchase price! But you get to keep the bonus report, "The Secret To The No BS One Hour Flag Pole Erection."

But here's the really good part of my guarantee: If you do ever send the book back, send me a copy of your receipt for your purchase of the magic hair growth material from the supply house and I'll refund every cent you paid for that too- up to $20.00! You risk absolutely nothing. Fair enough?

Here's how to order…

Risk Free Trial Offer

OK Mike- I'm going to take advantage of your risk-free trial offer to grow my own hair back and learn how to get a one hour steel pipe erection. I understand that if I'm not satisfied for any reason, I can send the book back anytime in my lifetime and get a complete refund of every penny I paid. But I get to keep the free bonus report and you'll also refund every penny I paid for the secret hair growth ingredient (up to $20.00) if I send you a copy of the receipt from the supply house. On that basis here's my $39.95 plus $4.95 S&H for a total of $44.95.

Please make your check or money order out to U.S. Health and mail it to: US Health, 1153 Malabar Rd. NE #8267, Palm Bay, FL 32907. You may also send your Visa, Mastercard or American Express number with expiration date. Your book and bonus report will be rushed to your door by first class mail in a discreet brown padded envelope. Thanks - Mike.

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REVEREND MIKE

Huckabee was born in 1955 in Hope, Arkansas. Yes, that Hope, Arkansas, just like Bill Clinton. Nearly everywhere he goes, Huckabee tells crowds where he's from, pauses for just a moment while it sinks in, and says, "But please, give us another chance!" Huckabee then tells them he is from a modest background. Paying the rent each month was a real struggle, and his father, a fireman, worked extra jobs repairing cars to make money. It was dirty work; Huckabee says the only soap he ever knew growing up was Lava, the gritty, grease-removing hand cleaner.

Huckabee was the first male in his family to graduate from high school. From there he went to Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, where he majored in religion, and then to the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. His first job was with the televangelist James Robison, and from there he moved on to become a minister at Baptist churches in Pine Bluff, and then Texarkana, Ark. During those years, he became a presence—and an accomplished performer—on local radio and television.

His new status brought with it an interest in politics, and in 1992 Huckabee ran for Senate against Democratic incumbent Dale Bumpers. He lost, but in 1993 he won a race for lieutenant governor, filling a vacancy created when Lt. Gov. Jim Guy Tucker moved into the governor's office after Clinton was elected president. Three years later, when Tucker resigned after being convicted of fraud in the Whitewater investigation, Huckabee became governor. He was elected in his own right in 1998 and 2002.

Beyond the simple oddity of their both hailing from Hope, there are some similarities between Huckabee and Clinton. On the campaign trail, especially in extemporaneous remarks, both are astonishingly good speakers. Huckabee might even be better than Clinton; people in Arkansas still talk about the speech he gave in 1997 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Central High School integration crisis. Clinton was on the podium with Huckabee that day, and by all accounts Huckabee blew his doors off. Huckabee can be that good.

More substantively, Huckabee, like Clinton as a presidential candidate, seems almost totally oriented toward domestic issues. That worked well for Clinton in 1992, at the dawn of what is now known to be a holiday from history. But it could be a problem for Huckabee in a Republican primary race still shaped by the after-effects of September 11. Huckabee seems to realize the problem, and sometimes it appears to frustrate him. That comes out in the first question I pose to him: Do the crowds who come to see him ask much about the war in Iraq?

"No," Huckabee says quickly. Like the other GOP candidates, Huckabee supports the troop surge and believes the consequences of a quick withdrawal would be disastrous. But he wants to talk about other things. "Among the Republican candidates, there's really very little separation about Iraq, with the exception of Ron Paul," he tells me. "And yet, we still go back through it over and over and over again, and I just never quite understood why we continued to plow the same ground when there were so many topics we never touched. Do you realize that in four debates we never had a single question on education? Not one. And two on health care, that I can recall."

Perhaps not surprisingly, education and health care are two of Huckabee's strengths. He has a solid record of improving Arkansas schools, and he has probably thought through the issues of health care more than any other candidate. Throughout his adult life, he has had a tendency to gain weight, and during his first years in the Arkansas governor's mansion he was quite fat. When he was diagnosed with adult-onset diabetes in 2003, and his doctor told him he had perhaps a decade to live unless he improved his health, Huckabee took up running and lost those 110 pounds. These days, he proudly tells crowds he has run four marathons. When he proposes reorienting the health-care system toward prevention, as he does during a forum sponsored by AARP at the Iowa State Fair, a lot of people applaud.

Mike Huckabee, like Bill Clinton as a presidential candidate, seems almost totally oriented toward domestic issues. That worked well for Clinton in 1992, but it could be a problem for Huckabee in a Republican primary race still shaped by the after-effects of September 11.

Huckabee's other strength, at least for strongly pro-life voters, is his position on abortion. He has been pro-life all along, and he seldom misses an opportunity to point out that other candidates have not been. When I ask Huckabee about his criticisms of Mitt Romney, he says he doesn't doubt Romney's sincerity, but believes the former Massachusetts governor's 2004 change of heart on abortion will leave him open to charges of flip-flopping.

"There's no doubt that the Democrats will use these changes of position in a general election," Huckabee tells me. When it comes to the Supreme Court, Huckabee won't discuss whom he might nominate, but adds: "I would say that it would be a type of justice like Scalia, who I think is probably the gold standard of the justices."

On immigration, Huckabee is a strong advocate of a fence

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Newark Mayor Blasts the Drug War

Newark Star Ledger, June 24, 2007
by Tom Moran

For Cory Booker, it has been a sobering first year as mayor. He is an angrier man now. And the focus of that anger is a public policy that he believes is ruining his city and threatening his hopes to change it.

The problem, he says, is New Jersey's tough tactics in the drug war. The result is to turn thousands of young men into economic cripples and to give the crime wave in Newark a flood of fresh recruits. Booker describes it as almost an economic genocide against African American men in his city.

And if it doesn't change, he says, he's ready to go to jail in protest, in the tradition of the civil rights movement. "I'm going to battle on this. We're going to start doing it the gentlemanly way. And then we're going to do the civil disobedience way. Because this is absurd."

He wants to reserve prison cells for those who do violence and divert the nonviolent drug offenders into treatment programs and halfway houses. He wants to change the New Jersey laws that bar many ex-cons from getting a driver's license. He wants a black kid from Newark who sells marijuana to clear his record as easily as the white kid from the suburbs who buys it.

About 1,500 convicts are released from state prison to Newark each year, and 1,000 of them will likely be arrested again within three years mostly for drug crimes.

"The drug war is causing crime," Booker says. "It is just chewing up young black men. And it's killing Newark."

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
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across the entire U.S.–Mexico border. While Congress debates guest-worker programs, Huckabee tells me, the most important problem is being ignored. "Seal the border," he says. "Until you do that, you don't have any control over how many people are coming in, who they are, and where they're going." At the same time, Huckabee has taken criticism for his proposal, as governor, to offer Arkansas in-state tuition to illegal aliens and their children. "I have always said you don't punish a child for the crime of a parent," Huckabee tells me. "Frankly, it's in our best interest to try to get that child on to a higher level of education."

A TAXER AND SPENDER?

The area where Huckabee has encountered the most flak from conservatives is taxes. In the week before the straw poll, the Club for Growth spent nearly $100,000 to run ads portraying him as a profligate taxer and spender. "There once was a governor from Hope, Arkansas, who raised taxes like there was no tomorrow," the ad began. "Who is that liberal tax-and-spend Arkansas governor? Bill Clinton? No. It's Mike Huckabee."

Specifically, the Club for Growth hit Huckabee for, among other things: supporting taxes on Internet sales and access; signing sales-tax increases on gas, cigarettes, and nursing homes; opposing repeal of the sales tax on food and medicine; and allowing a 17 percent sales-tax increase to become law.

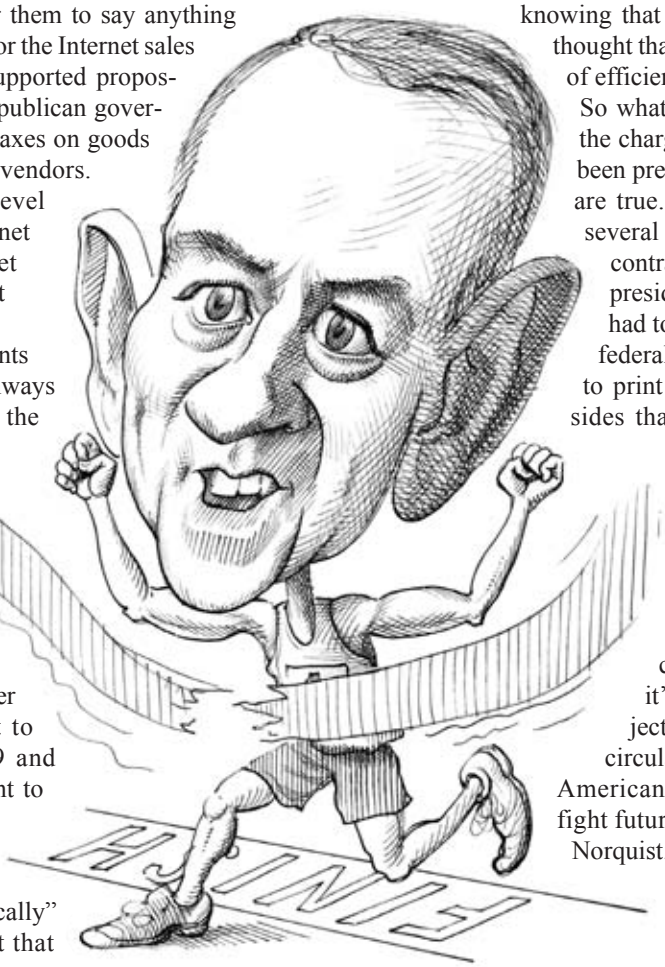
"All of those allegations have pretty much been debunked, repeatedly," Huckabee tells me. For example, "I have always staunchly opposed any tax on Internet access. I am adamantly opposed, always have been. For them to say anything otherwise is an outright lie." As for the Internet sales tax, Huckabee argues that he supported proposals—also supported by other Republican governors—to let states collect sales taxes on goods sold on the Net by out-of-state vendors. "It's simply a way to create a level playing field for taxes for Internet merchants as well as Main Street merchants," Huckabee says. "It wasn't a new tax at all."

On the gas tax, Huckabee points out that Arkansas' interstate highways were in terrible shape—among the worst in the nation. In 1999, the legislature approved an increase in the gas and diesel taxes, and Huckabee, who believed the increase was a good idea, signed the measure. Along with the gas tax, there was a $575 million bond issue for further improvements, which was put to a statewide vote in June 1999 and passed by a landslide, 80 percent to 20 percent. "I would argue that we did rather well on that."

On the grocery tax, Huckabee stresses that he "philosophically" supported its repeal, but he felt that in the money squeeze that beset Arkansas in 2001–02 the state couldn't afford it. "It was not that I philosophically opposed [repeal], because I have always philosophically supported it," Huckabee tells me. "The only thing they're going to hit me for is that I opposed it in the 2002 election, because I knew that we had already made deep [budget] cuts, and if you cut the grocery tax, there was no way to make it up."

The biggest tax increase during Huckabee's tenure was the sales-tax increase, which went to education, and it began not with Huckabee but with the Arkansas supreme court. In 2002, the court ruled that the state's system of funding its schools was unconstitutional and ordered the state government to come up with ways to spend more money on education and distribute it more equitably among the state's school districts.

Huckabee had to do something. And with a heavily Democratic legislature, it was a sure bet that more money was going to be raised and spent on schools. So along with a tax increase, Huckabee attempted to fix Arkansas' amazingly chaotic school-district system. The state has 75 counties, and at the time it had 310 school districts, each a separate fiefdom with its own budget and bosses. Some school districts had as few as 100 students in K–12. Huckabee wanted to consolidate districts so that each would have a minimum of 1,500 students. He lost that fight, with the legislature choosing to make the minimum size 350 students. Still, that meant the consolidation of the smallest districts, with significant savings for the state. Even so, when the bill got to Huckabee's desk, he declined to sign it, knowing that it would become law anyway. "I thought that we were not pushing for the level of efficiency that we should have," he says.



ROMAN GENN

So what does his record add up to? Well, the charges have not, as Huckabee claims, been pretty much debunked. Some of them are true. But Huckabee also cut taxes on several occasions, and he argues that, in contrast to the senators who want to be president, he was the man in charge who had to make hard decisions. "Unlike the federal government, governors don't get to print money," Huckabee tells me. Besides that, a number of his actions were undeniably popular with most Arkansans, with Huckabee working to meet the state's needs while hewing to conservative principles.

As for the Club for Growth critique—Huckabee has taken to calling it the "Club for Greed"—it's not the only authority on the subject. Huckabee has signed the pledge circulated by Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, promising to fight future tax increases. That has satisfied Norquist. "He has a troublesome history in supporting tax increases as governor, as did Ronald Reagan," Norquist tells me. "But in running

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How Could the Catholic Church SINK SO LOW?

There are two levels of reality in today's Catholic Church. There is the first level of magisterial teaching and then the second level of ordinary parish life (not all parishes, but still way too many). From the first level we learn that there are serious sins: premarital sex, adultery, abortion, homosexual behavior, etc. But at the second level we hear nothing about any of that.

Why not? Some pastors do believe what the Church teaches, but are afraid to preach it. They're garden-variety cowards. But there are other pastors who don't teach it because they *don't believe it*. And because they don't believe it, they don't adhere to it in their personal lives. They live sinfully duplicitous lives. And the truth is out.

Contrast this situation with that of the Episcopal Church over the past forty or so years. The Episcopal Church once taught high moral standards too. And many of their priests didn't adhere to them either. In Episcopalian circles there have been lots of stories about pedophile priests, actively homosexual priests, etc. But these stories didn't hit the headlines of newspapers, didn't make the covers of the news magazines, didn't get featured on TV. No one blew the whistle.

Why the difference? Before you accuse the media, consider how in the Old Testament, when Israel fell into idolatry and unrighteousness, the LORD punished her. The Catholic Church is the New Israel, the one true Church. The LORD will simply not let her go her own way. Remember the words of Hebrews 12:5-8,11: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD.... For whom the LORD loves He chastens.... If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening...then you are illegitimate and not sons.... Chastening seems...grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness...."

The Episcopal Church is not the one true Church (and has never claimed to be). The LORD has simply let the Episcopal Church go its gay and goofy way (Romans 1:24).

These are times of chastisement for the Catholic Church. Christ will simply not allow His wayward Bride to become a slut. Just read the Signs of the Times!

Christ is letting Catholics — especially those in the hierarchy — know that the moral rot and the dissent that justifies it must stop. All seminaries must teach the truth, not heresy. The pink-palace atmosphere of certain seminaries must end. Pastors must model and teach the moral doctrine of the Church. The time of purgation has arrived.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a feisty traditional Catholic monthly magazine, have been campaigning for years for a restoration of the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

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for president, he has made a written commitment that he would oppose tax increases." Unless Huckabee breaks his word, he'll be okay with Americans for Tax Reform.

Finally, Huckabee's tax bona fides might be helped by his enthusiastic embrace of the Fair Tax, which would eliminate all federal income taxes in favor of a tax on consumption. The movement is strong in some early-primary states and undoubtedly helped Huckabee in the Iowa straw poll. It's a pretty idealistic position; even if the Fair Tax had a chance of becoming reality—a remote possibility—Norquist and others believe it would be far, far in the future, with many steps in between. Still, Norquist tells me, "There's nothing wrong with that as a goal." In the end, whatever the Club for Growth says, Huckabee probably won't suffer much harm from his record on taxes.

'DEAR WAYNE'

So much for the standard issues of presidential campaigns. The wild card in Huckabee's record is his position on executive clemency, a power he exercised fairly liberally as governor of Arkansas. In the bus, I ask him about what is perhaps the single most controversial—and unquestionably the most bizarre—episode of his time in the governor's office.

It concerned a man named Wayne Dumond. In September 1984, Dumond kidnapped and raped a 17-year-old high-school cheerleader in the small eastern-Arkansas town of Forrest City. Dumond was allowed to remain free while awaiting trial, and in March 1985 two masked men entered his house, tied him up with fishing line, and castrated him. People were stunned; the case, already notorious, became much more so. And that was before the local sheriff, a rather colorful man named Coolidge Conlee, displayed Dumond's severed testicles in a jar of formaldehyde on his desk in the St. Francis County building. Amid tons of publicity, Dumond was found guilty and sentenced to life plus 20 years.

The case took on a political coloring when it became known that the victim was a distant cousin of Bill Clinton. After conviction, Dumond, who claimed he was innocent, asked Clinton for clemency. Clinton declined.

Dumond also argued that even if he were guilty his sentence was excessive, and his position won him some sympathy, not least on the grounds that he had suffered terribly at the hands of those unknown assailants. In April 1992, when Dumond had served just seven years, Lt. Gov. Tucker, acting as governor while Clinton was out of state campaigning for president, commuted Dumond's sentence to a level where he would be eligible for parole. That didn't mean Dumond would go free, only that the state parole board would consider the question. The board declined to free Dumond.

That's where things stood when Huckabee took office on July 15, 1996. Huckabee tells me he had his doubts about Dumond's guilt, and also felt sorry for him over the castration attack. On September 20, just weeks after taking office, Huckabee announced that he intended to set Dumond free, saying that there were "serious questions as to the legitimacy of his guilt." On October 31, Huckabee met with the parole board. Not long after, the board voted to free Dumond, but on the condition he move to another state. Huckabee was pleased, in part because—given that the board had voted to free Dumond—there was no need for Huckabee to commute the sentence or pardon him. So Huckabee denied Dumond's now-irrelevant pardon application while at the same time congratulating him on his freedom. "Dear Wayne," Huckabee wrote in a letter to Dumond. "My desire is that you be released from prison. I feel that parole is the best way for your reintroduction to society to take place."

But no state would take Dumond. He remained behind bars for two and a half more years, until the board voted to free him in Arkansas. He was released in October 1999 and returned home. The next year, Dumond left the state, moving to a small town near Kansas City, Mo. Within weeks of arriving, he sexually assaulted and murdered a 39-year-old woman at an apartment complex near his home. The day that happened, everyone knew that freeing Wayne Dumond had been a very, very bad idea.

The wild card in Huckabee's record is his position on executive clemency, a power he exercised fairly liberally as governor of Arkansas.

A political storm erupted. Huckabee sought cover by saying that all he had done was to deny Dumond's pardon application. But some Democrats claimed that Huckabee had pressured the parole board to free Dumond. What actually happened between Huckabee and the board remains unclear to this day, but there is no doubt that Huckabee wanted Wayne Dumond set free. And today, he knows he was terribly wrong.

But he's still defensive. "My only official action was to deny his clemency," Huckabee tells me in Iowa. He spreads the blame around, not only to Tucker, who originally commuted Dumond's sentence, but to Bill Clinton as well. "Tucker could not have done that without Clinton's full knowledge and approval," Huckabee says.

I ask about the "Dear Wayne" letter. Didn't Huckabee want Dumond to go free? "I thought he would, you know, be clean," Huckabee tells me. "And he had a job, he had sponsors lined up, so at the time, I did not have this apprehension that something horrible like that would happen. I did want him to report in [to parole authorities], because I just didn't know—you never know about a guy like that."

As he talks, Huckabee looks down. "I hate it like crazy," he says. "It's one of the most horrible things ever that he went off and did what he did. It's just terrible. There's nothing you can say, but my gosh, it's the thing you pray never happens. And it did."

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The Dumond case followed Huckabee around for the rest of his time in the governor's office. In his 2002 reelection bid, his Democratic opponent based virtually her entire campaign on the issue. And Huckabee's actions toward Dumond raise larger questions about his views on crime and punishment. Critics, and some friends, too, say Huckabee's position was deeply influenced by his Christian faith. "When I first met him, I was going through his positions on issues and I said, 'You're a conservative, so I'm sure you oppose granting parole for violent felons,'" says Dick Morris, the campaign consultant who ran Huckabee's first run for lieutenant governor. "And he said, 'Oh no, I would never take that position, because the concept of Christian duty requires that there is a possibility of forgiveness. The concept of Christian forgiveness requires that we keep open the process of parole—use it sparingly, but keep it open.'"

When I ask Huckabee about that, he reminds me that he was tough on a lot of criminals, too. "Heck, I executed more people than any governor in the history of the state," Huckabee tells me. "It's not something I'm bragging about, I'm just saying that if it had been simply a matter of my Christian conscience saying I don't believe in capital punishment, then I was pretty lousy in my conscience." Watching him speak, it's clear Huckabee feels deeply about the issue. If he continues to rise in the polls, it's likely he'll be talking about it a lot more.

LOAVES AND FISHES

The preacher in Huckabee comes out from time to time. After his good showing in the straw poll, he hurries from his bus to meet reporters and exult with supporters. "This was five loaves and two fishes, and it fed the multitude," he tells them, stressing the big results he got from a very small investment of money. "This is David and Goliath, putting that little smooth stone in a sling."

People see Huckabee on the stump, or in debates, and they like him. He's sharp and funny and knows his stuff. But there's more to him than the guy who makes the best joke onstage. He has spent years in a governor's office, making all sorts of decisions he'll have to defend should he become a first-tier candidate. If given the chance, he'll probably be able to do so, and do it well. But his lack of standing on war and terrorism could hurt him badly with Republican primary audiences.

On the other hand, it likely wouldn't be a problem in a general election, especially considering Huckabee's strengths in education and health care. "The Democrats won't be able to use that against me," Huckabee tells me. "They won't say, 'There's no way an Arkansas governor can be president—he doesn't have any foreign-policy experience.' That one's off the table."

So it is. But first Huckabee has to win the Republican nomination. And despite his early success, it's not at all clear whether GOP voters, still deeply concerned with national security, will want to choose their own Man from Hope. **NR**

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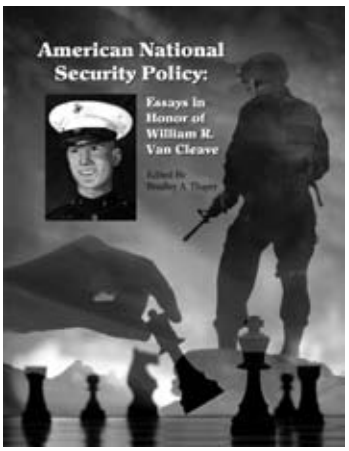

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■ AT WAR III

When 'Thoughtful' Is Unthoughtful

Sen. Richard Lugar and the disastrous 'middle way' on Iraq

RICHARD LOWRY

If you are a Republican, there is no ticket to being considered thoughtful quite like dissenting from President Bush's Iraq policy. Few senators stand to be as "thoughtful" in this sense in the September debate over Iraq as the six-term Indiana Republican Richard Lugar.

Not that getting such credit will be Lugar's motivation. Everyone—even those who doubt his vaunted foreign-policy acumen—credits Dick Lugar's sincerity. He doesn't lord his supposed intellectual superiority over others—as Chuck Hagel does. He is not putting political considerations over the national interest—as so many Democrats do. He's not a puffed-up parody of a senator—like John Warner or Joe Biden.

Lugar is one of those people who were "born old," and it's possible to imagine him burnishing his Council on Foreign Relations credentials back as an Eagle Scout in Indianapolis in the 1940s. He didn't come to Washington as a firebrand who mellowed out into a compromising elder statesman, but has been a compromising elder statesman ever since he was elected in 1976.

So when Lugar dissented from the Bush administration in a June speech, calling for a middle way between a pullout and the surge, it was Lugar being Lugar. Which is harmless enough in most circumstances, but has potentially dire consequences in the midst of a politically contentious shooting war in which maintaining domestic support is crucial.

Fellow Republicans aren't necessarily going to follow Lugar in September, since, a shy man, he tends to be a legislative lone wolf. His fellow elder statesman (and co-sponsor on an Iraq compromise bill), John Warner, is much more likely to try to line up Democrats and fellow Republicans on legislation. But as the reaction to Lugar's June speech shows, his middle-ground position will make him the conscience of the Senate Republican conference among Democrats and in the media.

After the speech, Harry Reid said, "When the history books are written—and they will be written—I believe that Senator Lugar's words yesterday could be remembered as a turning point in this intractable civil war in Iraq." Post-speech, the ordinarily low-profile Lugar appeared on NPR, *The Today Show*, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, CNN's *Late Edition*, *Face the Nation*, *Charlie Rose*, and—after another version of the speech in July—*This Week with George Stephanopoulos*. In one question, Charlie Rose told Lugar, "You watched this carefully—way back, I assume, since you were a Rhodes Scholar, you have been looking at foreign policy and thinking about, you know, a global world."

Lugar is routinely accorded such praise, for no obvious reasons related to his accomplishments. He is most associated with the Nunn-Lugar law to destroy old Soviet nuclear matériel, a worthy program that Lugar obsesses over as if it were his most noteworthy legacy—which it almost certainly will be. He didn't achieve much during his recent chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, at least not compared with the reforms in State Department and U.N. programs shepherded into law by his predecessor, Jesse Helms. Lugar nonetheless has ascended to the status of foreign-policy giant. What was once said of the TV interviewer David Frost might be applied to Dick Lugar: "He has risen without a trace."

MIDDLE WAYS AND WRONG WAYS

Lugar's reputation depends largely on how he embodies the tendency in Washington—especially in the Senate—to believe that all problems are solvable by compromise. The people who hold this view tend to consider themselves cosmopolitans, but they are guilty of their own kind of parochialism, believing that what happens around a conference table in Washington is the most important thing in the world. Sometimes, it is. And sometimes the middle way is the most sensible. But not on the Iraq War.

Lugar's middle way in June was taken as a sign of his maturity of judgment and realism, but it was really an analytical embarrassment. A stew of clichés, just-so stories, and wishful thinking, the speech is an inadvertent indictment of the foreign-policy establishment to the extent that Lugar represents it.

It is hard to disagree with Lugar's description of key constraints in the Iraq War as set out in his speech, which his office says still represents his thinking. He said that political progress in Baghdad has been disappointing and that there isn't much cause for optimism in the near term on that front; that the war is a stress on our military; and that domestic political considerations limit the administration's options in Iraq. All this is true, indeed mind-numbingly conventional. What to do about it?

Lugar called for a redeployment of U.S. forces and noted, "Numerous locations for temporary or permanent military bases have been suggested, including Kuwait or other nearby states, the Kurdish territories, or defensible locations in Iraq outside of urban areas." Obviously, a counterinsurgency war of the sort we are waging now could not be fought from those locations.

Lugar is therefore advocating the end of the war as we know it. There would be no strategic reason to keep an enormous contingent of tens of thousands of American troops, pulled from combat patrols, in Iraq or the region if they weren't going to fight. They might as well be removed to Okinawa, as John Murtha once advocated, or simply come home. Lugar's talk of putting them in bases in Iraq or elsewhere is just a way to call his proposal "redeployment" rather than outright "withdrawal."

He is less forthright than other Bush critics who say the war is lost and hopeless—which at least makes their strategy of withdrawal logical. Why fight a war that is lost? Lugar professes to be above such concepts: "We risk becoming fixated on artificial notions of achieving victory or avoiding defeat, when these ill-

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defined concepts have little relevance to our operations in Iraq."

Lugar's middle way itself depends on ill-defined concepts with little relevance to Iraq. Would we be better off if we had taken Lugar's advice and already short-circuited the surge? To ask the question is almost to answer it. The turn of the Sunni tribes against al-Qaeda—facilitated by our counterinsurgency operations—would be in jeopardy, as would the progress we've made in diminishing sectarian killings in Baghdad, which has been dependent on our intensive neighborhood-to-neighborhood patrolling.

Lugar posits that under his redeployment we would continue training Iraqi troops and delivering economic assistance, but "end the U.S. attempt to interpose ourselves between Iraqi sectarian factions." It would be wonderful—and awfully convenient to politicians here at home—if we could continue efforts that enjoy a broad consensus in the U.S. (training and economic assistance) while discontinuing the effort that doesn't (policing a civil war). But the dynamics in Iraq don't allow it.

If we were to permit the civil war again to burn out of control, the Iraqi army would dissolve into more of a sectarian force even than it is now, no matter how much training we were doing (and some of the best training is joint combat operations with the Iraqis). As for economic assistance, a vicious insurgency and a civil war would very likely mean it had been wasted—as we have learned to our grief over the last four years.

Besides, there are sound strategic reasons to "interpose" ourselves in the civil war. Lugar himself says "we have an interest in preventing the disorder and sectarian violence in Iraq from upsetting wider regional stability," and lists a parade of horribles that would follow if we didn't: the fall of friendly governments in the region, interrupted oil flows, huge refugee exoduses. The most direct way to prevent an Iraqi civil war from having these strategic consequences is to tamp it down at its source, in Iraq.

Constraining the civil war is also integral to the fight against al-Qaeda, which Lugar expresses an interest—in theory—in continuing in Iraq. In seeking to stoke a civil war in Iraq, al-Qaeda has not only indulged the Sunni-extremist hatred for the Shiites, but pursued a classic insurgency strategy. Insurgents often engage in provocations in order to prompt an overreaction from their adversaries that will drive more people into their arms—e.g., the Samarra bombing that almost tore Iraq apart.

A hot civil war serves to undermine the credibility of the central government by accentuating its sectarian aspect. And by prompting retaliation from the Shiites, sectarian violence pushes Sunnis toward the extremists for protection, and for vengeance in turn. It is in these conditions that al-Qaeda can thrive, and this is why it has consistently worked to provoke civil war. Lugar wants to cede al-Qaeda one of its key strategic objectives.

Lugar despairs of political progress in Iraq. "Sectarian faction-

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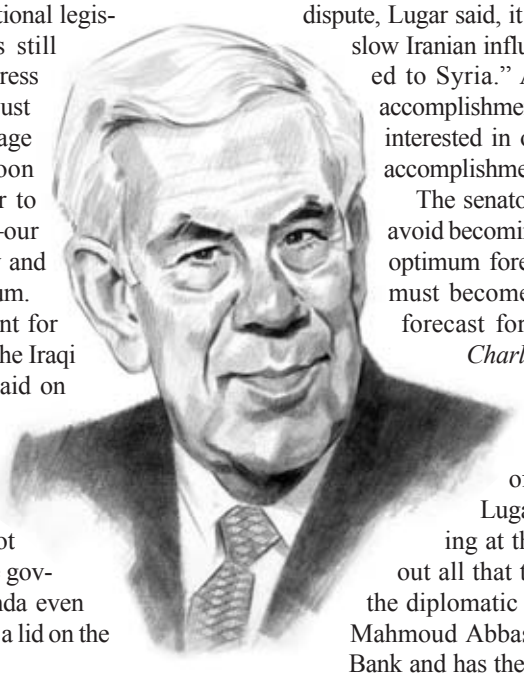
alism will not abate anytime soon," he said in June, "and probably cannot be controlled from the top." He appears to be right about that, at least for the moment. Thus, we have been attempting to control it from the bottom, working from neighborhood to neighborhood and from tribe to tribe. This has met with success, reducing sectarian killings in Baghdad and eroding mainstream Sunni support for al-Qaeda, the author of most of the sectarian suicide bombings.

Lugar falls into the trap of making a fetish of the benchmarks for political progress that were formulated back in January. It is important to recall their purpose. They were ultimately considered a means to draw Sunnis away from the insurgency and to our side. The benchmarks have not been met, but the Sunnis have come our way anyway—in itself a momentous piece of political progress.

This progress shouldn't be underestimated simply because it came about in a way we didn't envision. National legislation aimed at sectarian reconciliation is still important, but if we care about political progress in Iraq it would be foolish to abandon the robust military involvement that is our main leverage over both the Shiites and the Sunnis. As soon as it is clear that we are leaving—whether to Kuwait, Kurdistan, or bases within Iraq—our political leverage will diminish considerably and the men with guns will move to fill the vacuum.

Incredibly, Lugar not only fails to account for this, he believes we will be able to fine-tune the Iraqi political system *after* a redeployment. He said on *Charlie Rose* that after a redeployment "we have some hopes of really working the Iraqi problem out—its business aspects, its political aspects, the corruption aspects which siphon off much of the oil that is not going anywhere, including the treasury of the government of Iraq." This is an ambitious agenda even when we have 160,000 troops in Iraq keeping a lid on the place; in their absence, it's an absurd fantasy.



Sen. Richard Lugar

Similarly, Lugar believes that we can maintain—and even increase—our diplomatic leverage even as we redeploy. As if our diplomatic standing wouldn't be affected by a deterioration in security conditions that everyone—with perhaps the exception of certain Washington elder statesmen—would consider an American defeat.

"A diplomatic offensive," Lugar said in June, "is likely to be easier in the context of a tactical drawdown of U.S. troops in Iraq." This drawdown, Lugar argues, would increase the chances of diplomatic and economic aid to Iraq from the Europeans and from multilateral organizations "who have sought to limit their association with an unpopular war." Would the war really become *more* popular after even the U.S.—which had so much invested in it—had effectively abandoned Iraq to chaos and civil war?

COME ONE, COME ALL

Neocons have been accused of putting too much faith in military force to effect changes in political culture. Lugar places the same sort of faith in his proposed diplomatic forum open to all countries in the region, including Syria and Iran. It would be a means, he explained in his July follow-on speech, of achieving "transparency" in a region beset by "conspiracy theories, corruption, and the opaque policies of non-democratic governments." Actually, in such an environment, a diplomatic forum is more likely to be an occasion for crowd-pleasing posturing and lies. There's a reason that the most productive Israeli–Arab negotiations have taken place in secret, not in "a predictable and regular forum."

"I believe," Lugar maintained in June, "it would be in the self-interest of every nation in the region to attend such meetings." Unfortunately, nations such as Syria and Iran don't conduct their foreign policy on the basis of what Dick Lugar thinks their interests are, or they wouldn't be destabilizing Iraq in the first place.

Lugar doesn't overestimate just the effects of diplomacy but the effects of a mere demonstration of a commitment to diplomacy. If we "demonstrate clearly that the United States is committed to helping facilitate a negotiated outcome" in the Israeli–Palestinian dispute, Lugar said, it "would undercut terrorist propaganda, slow Iranian influence, and open new possibilities related to Syria." All of that—not through diplomatic accomplishment, but through the mere *show* of being interested in one day perhaps achieving diplomatic accomplishments.

The senator warned that the administration must avoid becoming "quixotic in its attempt to achieve its optimum forecasts for Iraq." Instead, apparently, it must become quixotic in achieving the optimum forecast for regional diplomacy. Lugar said on *Charlie Rose* that our embassy in Iraq "might be a headquarters like Geneva used to be for various international groups." Like Geneva? In the midst of a Baghdad riven by civil war?

Lugar's construct that the Iraq War is coming at the price of regional diplomacy leaves out all that the administration has been doing on the diplomatic front lately. It is working to prop up Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and has the Israelis' cooperation in that project. It spent years forging closer ties with the Gulf states with an eye to the looming Iran threat, and a $20 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries is meant to cement those relationships. And U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker has met with the Iranians three times to try to coax them to be more cooperative in Iraq—to no effect. All the while, the EU-3 have been trying to coax the Iranians out of their nuclear program—also to no effect. Lugar ignores all this in the belief that diplomacy can't truly happen until we lose the Iraq War.

And all this, oddly enough, qualifies as thoughtfulness. Republicans will be tempted to separate themselves from President Bush in September, and eventually our troop levels will have to decline in Iraq. But they shouldn't fool themselves. We either have to continue fighting to stabilize the country and rout al-Qaeda, or withdraw and admit those goals aren't achievable. A middle way, as Dick Lugar has unintentionally demonstrated, is make-believe suitable only for Senate speeches and TV interviews.

In his June speech, Lugar knocked "protagonists on both sides" for "ignoring the complexities at the core of our situation." But sometimes it's the protagonist in the middle who is the one who can't handle reality. **NR**

DARREN GYGI

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■ POLITICS

Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda

Where the GOP went wrong

RAMESH PONNURU

HINDSIGHT isn't really 20/20, as arguments about history prove. When it comes to recent political history, hindsight is only a little bit better than foresight. It is easy to see that the Republican party is in bad shape right now. Figuring out just which wrong steps the party took is a little trickier.

We can look at numbers to tell the present's sorry story. Only a quarter to a third of the population approves of President Bush's job performance. Republicans are a minority in both chambers of Congress, and may lose ground in both in the next election. A recent Pew Research Center study found that self-identified Democrats outnumber self-identified Republicans in the population 50 to 35 percent—the largest the Democratic advantage has been since Pew started the survey in 1987. Over the last decade, the survey found, the public has also steadily grown more favorably disposed toward governmental activism. Young people have become a solid Democratic bloc.

Many observers think that there is a simple explanation for these numbers: Republicans made a disastrous political mistake in launching the Iraq War. And there is no question that the drawn-out carnage there has dragged Republicans' ratings down across the board. But it is not as clear as it seems that the Republicans would be doing much better than they are now if we had not invaded Iraq.

Leave aside the possibility that a Saddam Hussein still in power would have slipped free of sanctions and begun menacing and intimidating his neighbors again—in which case Bush would have looked weak, not least to conservatives. Consider, instead, the state of play in the late 1990s. At that time, too, the country seemed to be moving in a liberal direction. Republicans lost House seats in the 1996, 1998, and 2000 elections. The Senate elections of 2000 were a liberal blowout.

Bush won only by moving his party significantly to the left on size-of-government issues. Even so, he barely won, with the combined vote for Al Gore and Ralph Nader besting the left-of-center showing in any presidential election since 1964. Prior to September 11, Bush's administration was faltering. It was about to unveil, as the centerpiece of its agenda for the fall of its first year, an initiative called "Communities of Character."

September 11 reinvigorated the Republican party by restoring the importance of its traditional advantage on national-security questions. That advantage may have proven transient; but for several years it saved the party from the minority status to which it had seemed to be headed. Republicans gained seats in 2002, instead of losing them in the midterm-election pattern. National security (along with a values-based realignment in the South) gained them more seats in 2004.

That national-security advantage would not have been nearly as large without the Iraq War. What would have separated the parties on national security going into 2002? Both parties favored the Afghan campaign, and, at the time, the Patriot Act. The Republicans that fall made an issue out of how Democrats were holding up the bill to create the Department of Homeland Security in order to make sure its workers would be able to unionize. But even in the race where the Republicans made the most hay out of that issue—the Georgia Senate race between Democrat Max Cleland and Republican Saxby Chambliss—differences over Iraq contributed to their victory.

Iraq also made the Democrats seem to be unserious and weak. They demanded a vote on the impending war, then complained when Bush asked them to vote before the 2002 elections. By 2004, the Iraq War was paying multiple dividends for the Republicans. The reaction to it pulled the Democrats to the left on security issues generally, while leading John Kerry into a series of unpresidential contortions.

It should go without saying that it would be grossly immoral to launch an unnecessary war to win an election, or to flinch from a necessary one for fear of losing one. But the prevailing view is that Iraq was a mistake for the Republicans in precisely these Machiavellian terms, and it is not as clear as everyone thinks that this view is correct.

Other proffered examples of Republican mistakes are even less compelling. Was Bush too partisan? Bill Clinton associated his political opponents with the Oklahoma City bombers, and suffered no ill will for it. Bush took office with some of his opponents convinced that he had won illegitimately, and all of them confident that the future was theirs. His gestures at conciliation—working with Ted Kennedy on an education bill, naming the Justice Department building after Robert F. Kennedy, renominating one of Clinton's judicial nominees—never bought him any good will from the opposition. During the time the Democrats held the Senate in 2001 and 2002, Bush routinely complained about "the Senate" and almost never about "Senate Democrats": Did anyone even notice this gesture?

One theory currently in vogue is that Bush White House aides treated congressmen and their aides imperiously. That's true. But every White House generates such complaints, and many of those complaints are justified every time. In small matters, ill will may have cost Bush support for legislation. But if his ratings were still high congressmen would get past their pique. And highhandedness isn't what caused those low ratings.

CHECKING IT TWICE

My own list of Republican political mistakes is tentative, as I try to heed my own admonition about the impossibility of imagining a counterfactual history of the last few years. Keep in mind that the list includes only errors that cost Republicans electoral support. A larger list could be made of errors that kept Republicans from achieving their policy objectives. (This list includes some errors of this type, but only when they also cost Republicans political support.)

1. *Occupying Iraq*. Everyone dumps on Ahmed Chalabi, but we

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might have been better off if we had quickly created a provisional government and dumped it in his lap. This option would have brought its own problems, of course; but my sense is that it was toxic for our presence to take on the character of an occupation so quickly. Our goal from the start should have been a freer Iraq that posed no threat to its neighbors and could, over time and with luck, grow into a model liberal democracy. Every month the Coalition Provisional Authority ran things, we bought more responsibility over the country's fate.

2. *Staying the course*. The public thought we were losing in Iraq all through 2006, and the president has admitted that he thought so too. Instead of making a public acknowledgment that his strategy needed to change, however, he hunkered down and stuck behind the people associated with that strategy: most prominently, defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld. If over the spring and summer of 2006 the president had fired Rumsfeld, adopted a new counterinsurgency strategy, and increased troop levels—as both supporters and critics of his who had studied the situation in Iraq were urging—Republicans would not have made the fatal impression of being out of touch with reality. Some of the gains we are seeing now might have come before the elections.

There were many close races in the House and Senate. A change of course in Iraq—the same one we took subsequent to the election—would probably not have saved the House, but would have left Nancy Pelosi with a precariously small majority facing Mitch McConnell as Senate majority leader across the Hill.

3. *Blocking a minimum-wage increase*. Most readers of this magazine, I'm sure, believe—as I do—that raising the minimum wage destroys some entry-level job opportunities while benefiting a lot of people who don't need the help (e.g., the kids of middle-class and affluent households working after school). The public does not agree with us on this issue; never has. Opposition to a higher minimum wage is, for many people, explicable only in terms of greed and heartlessness.

The minimum wage is a powerful issue for the Left, and local minimum-wage ballot initiatives boosted Democratic turnout in many states last year. Republicans, seeing the difficult political climate, should have counted themselves lucky to have fended off a minimum-wage increase for a decade and passed an increase. They would have blunted the Democrats' weapon. Instead, they lost every initiative and we ended up with a minimum-wage increase passed by a Democratic Congress.

4. *Botching Social Security*. A good case can be made that the Bush administration should not have taken up Social Security reform in the first half of 2005. It was never clear, even in the first weeks after Bush's reelection victory in 2004, where the votes for the initiative were going to come from. It seemed highly unlikely that even the best-designed campaign for reform was going to lead to the kind of public demand for it that would force politicians to acquiesce.

The way the administration went about selling reform left a lot to be desired, too. It concentrated too much on the abstract future problem of the program's insolvency, and not enough on the case that young people could do a lot better with a modernized system. Republican supporters of reform were also a bit inflexible: Early on, they could have met some Democrats halfway, by agreeing that private retirement accounts be set up outside the Social Security system. (Since money is fungible, it wouldn't have mattered.)

All in all, though, congressional Republicans were more at fault than the Bush administration was. If congressional Republicans had hung together and passed a reform in the summer of 2005, by election time three things would have been clear. First, nobody's retirement benefits would have been cut. Second, people would have seen money beginning to accumulate in their accounts. Third, the Republicans would have been able to enact a major domestic reform. Whether or not it was wise to raise reform as an issue, once it was done the safer course for congressional Republicans would have been to pass it—even to figure out a way to get it through the Senate on a simple-majority vote. Instead, they complained, and did nothing, and Republicans lost all legislative momentum.

5. *Waiting too long on health care*. President Bush unveiled a rather elegant plan to reform health care in his State of the Union address—in 2007, when the Democrats had retaken Congress and there was no chance it would be enacted. Maybe the administration should have spent the first half of 2005 on it instead?

6. *Letting corporate welfare grow*. A big fight over corporate welfare would have aided Republicans in multiple ways. It would have made the public less likely to see them as on the side of the rich, powerful, and connected. It would have safeguarded the party's reputation for thrift. It might even have altered the public's perception of welfarism, and whom it helps, with lasting benefits for the smaller-government party down the line. An early opportunity was blown in 2002. President Bush should have vetoed the farm bill and forced Congress to send him a slimmer one—even a slightly slimmer one. He didn't.

7. *Presuming innocence*. A lot of Republican congressmen have lost their seats because of scandals. Most of those cases were serious. Some of them were invented. All of them were mishandled by the party.

DARREN GYGI

Even Karl nods.

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Conrad Burns nearly won reelection to the Senate even though he had extensive ties to convicted felon Jack Abramoff (and also had a penchant for saying idiotic things in public). If he had been forced aside, any other Republican would have won that seat, and Republicans could have sent the money they saved fighting for it to Virginia and Missouri, where they also lost close races. Republicans might have lost three Senate seats rather than six. If they had cut their losses by one, they would still have the majority.

In the House, Don Sherwood should have been pushed out of his Pennsylvania seat when his mistress accused him of strangling her. It is not hard to think of five other House seats that were lost to scandal. If they hadn't been, House Republicans would be more than a third of the way back to being in the majority already.

The presumption of innocence is a fine legal principle. That it can't apply in politics is unfair but true.

8. *Whiffing on ethics reform*. John Boehner became the House majority leader in February 2006. His first act should have been to push through a tough ethics-reform package including a ban on privately funded travel by congressmen. Some of the reforms might have ended up being overreactions. But the Republicans had an opportunity to demonstrate that they took the scandals seriously, and they blew it. Too many Republicans cared more about keeping their perks than keeping their majority, and ended up losing both.

9. *Muzzling Dick Cheney*. It may seem counterintuitive to suggest that the administration would have benefited from greater publicity for the vice president, since he is now an extremely unpopular figure. But it is worth remembering that as late as 2004 Cheney was viewed favorably by 47 percent of the public. (He had roughly the same numbers that Al Gore did in the summer of 2000.) Cheney has always been a pretty reassuring figure on television. My hunch is that his decision to say little in public has contributed greatly to the widespread view of him as a sinister figure plotting in secret.

Cheney's own contemptuous attitude toward the press hasn't helped. It was the wrong tone to strike, in particular, for a man trying to make sure that the executive branch has as much power as possible to fight terrorism. It played as a man who wanted to wield power in secret—which sometimes has to be done, especially in a war—without ever having to explain himself.

10. *Naming a special prosecutor in the Plame affair*. In the late spring of 2003, just after the Iraq invasion, controversy erupted in D.C. over 16 words that the president had included in his State of the Union address earlier that year. The words were defensible: Bush had said that British intelligence had found that Saddam Hussein had sought enriched uranium in Africa. British intelligence continues to stand by that claim. But because the administration could not establish that Hussein had obtained uranium from Niger, it disavowed the words. That put blood in the water.

Joseph Wilson then took to the op-ed page of the *New York Times* to allege that his trip to Niger, and his subsequent report about it, proved that the administration had knowingly lied. Robert Novak then reported that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA. A new controversy then erupted, in which Karl Rove was accused of blowing her cover to Novak in order to get back at Wilson.

Early on, the Justice Department knew who had done the leaking and that no law had been broken. But John Ashcroft, then the attorney general, gave in to pressure to name a special prosecutor to look into the matter. Such prosecutions tend to take on a life of their own, and so it was in this case.

The decision to name a special prosecutor had three negative effects on Republicans. First, it created recurrent bad publicity. Second, it distracted Rove, who had to lawyer up and testify to a grand jury repeatedly. Third, it led ultimately to the prosecution and conviction of Cheney's top aide, Scooter Libby. That conviction forced a no-win choice on the president. Commuting Libby's sentence was unpopular, but not commuting it would have alienated what was left of his base. And it was all so avoidable.

11. *Making immigration an issue*. Supporters of the president's immigration plan say that a hard line on immigration will alienate Hispanics and that the Republican party can ill afford to do so. They are right on both counts. But it was their own fault that the issue became inflamed in the first place.

The administration made an immigration proposal that was bound to be unpopular with most conservatives. It was entirely predictable that it would call forth a lot of criticism, of varying degrees of reasonableness and heat, and that relations between Hispanics and Republicans would suffer. Those relations would have suffered even if the president had gotten his way on immigration, since it would have been obvious to everyone that Democrats were more enthusiastic about his plan than Republicans were.

What makes the administration's behavior all the stranger is that it is happier with the status quo than its conservative critics are. Seeking a grand reform was exactly the way to draw out those critics and expand their number.

A low-profile policy of increasing enforcement of immigration laws at the border and the workplace, from the earliest days of the administration, would have served its interests much better. After a few years, it might have yielded a political climate in which it was possible to grant legal status to many illegal immigrants without a bitter debate.

12. *Relying on the party machine*. House Republicans understandably wanted to maintain operational control of the floor: That's part of what having a majority is for. Both House and Senate Republicans wanted to bottle up Democratic bills. The president, meanwhile, wanted to avoid vetoing anything that had passed a Republican chamber, let alone two of them. Both habits made sense as a way of building the party's strength.

The costs were less obvious. If everything that came out of D.C. had a Republican stamp on it, then the Republicans were responsible for everything, good or bad. Since there was no clear conservative majority in the country as a whole, on several occasions the Republicans were able to maintain control of the lawmaking apparatus only by coming up with watered-down versions of liberal bills in which they did not believe, which demoralized conservatives.

Finally, this strategy eliminated the incentive, among lawmakers from either party, to develop a creative conservative bipartisanship. Republicans were not interested in working with Democrats in bulk on legislation, and Democrats knew it. Opportunities were thus lost on Social Security reform, tax reform, and even on aspects of national-security law.

The foregoing list may make it seem as though all is now lost. That is not necessarily the case. Improved conditions in Iraq, followed by a drawdown of American troops, might go far to revive Republicans' fortunes. To call this presidency failed is premature. If the Republican party and conservatism make a comeback, let's hope that next time they make fewer unforced errors. **NR**

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the long view

ROB LONG

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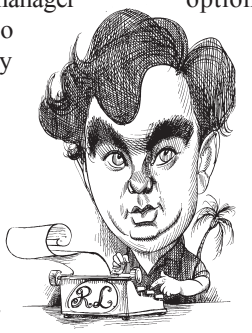
Thank you.



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And that your monthly payment of

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Sub-prime meltdown got your hedge fund down? Have to sell the house in—

"This is Mrs. Johnson at the Federal Reserve Bank Customer Care Center. How may I give you excellent service today?"

"Um, I'm calling from Countrywide—"

"May I have your account number, please?"

"Yeah. Yeah. I just put it in there and—"

"It's for your security, sir."

"Okay. It's nine-seven-four, three-three-three, five-two-nine-five."

"And who am I speaking with?"

"I'm the chief financial officer."

"Sir, our records indicate that you are currently past due on your account."

"That's why I'm calling. It's just been sort of a tough couple of weeks here, with the sub-prime thing going on, and getting hammered on Wall Street, and to be perfectly frank, I'm just . . . it's just . . . it's just been incredibly stressful and, I mean, I'm not well, I'm sick, and you guys keep calling and upsetting everybody here, and, I mean, what do you want me to do? I'm working on it, okay? I know we're behind. I know we owe you like, five hundred million, and—"

"Six hundred million."

"Six? How did our monthly get up to six?"

"Late fees, sir."

"Are you kidding me? You know what? You guys are bloodsuckers! You hear me? Bloodsuckers! You take a company when it's down and you . . . you . . . you trick it into signing all sorts of stuff and—"

"Sir, when can we expect payment?"

"That's what I'm telling you! I don't know! In a few weeks. Okay? I'll get the money together somehow. We've got some buildings I guess we could sell. Maybe a business unit or two."

"Can I put you down for payment on the 19th?"

"You're killing me. I hope you know that."

"Sir, federal regulations require that I inform you of your right to industry-sponsored credit counseling. Sometimes, for companies like yours that have taken advantage of loose credit terms and are now experiencing difficulty, a credit counselor can be a helpful resource. Should I have one contact you at your business or residence?"

"Credit counseling? Wow. We used to offer that to our deadbeat customers."

"Sir, are you aware that you could consolidate your current debt of eleven billion nine hundred million dollars, including your next payment and late fees, into an AllOver FedJumbo Adjustable Rate PremiumCash loan, with your next payment not due until October?"

"You're upselling me? Wow. We used to do that, too."

"Just giving you as many options as we can, sir. We value your business. Please hold the line for a loan specialist who will guide you through the AllOver FedJumbo Adjustable Rate PremiumCash loan application process."

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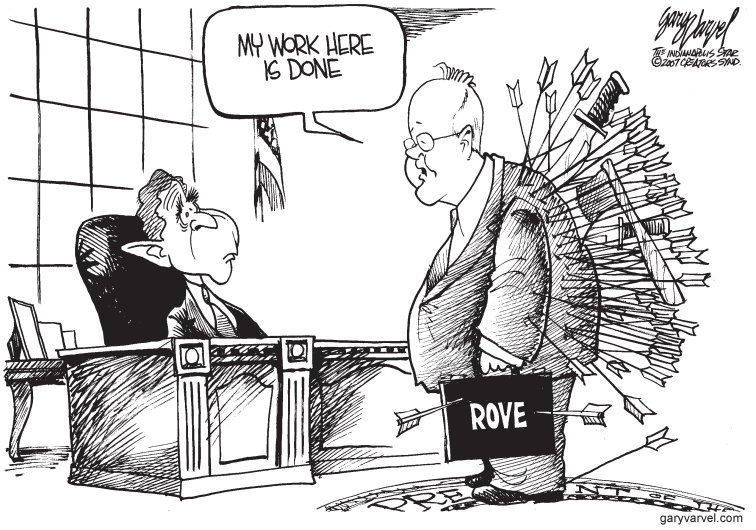
Over every choo-choo train.
No one sucks the candy cane.

—W. H. von Dreele

"Have I caught you at a bad time, Ferguson?"



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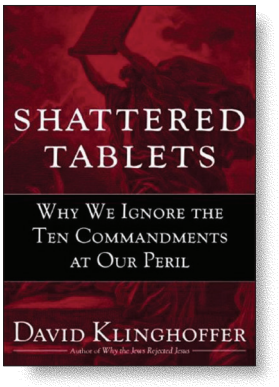
Thou Shalt Not . . .



Shattered Tablets: Why We Ignore the Ten Commandments at Our Peril, by David Klinghoffer (Doubleday, 256 pp., $24.95)

YUVAL LEVIN

When entering the chamber of the U.S. Supreme Court, visitors walk past a massive wooden door. On the door's lower half, beautifully engraved into the oak, is an image of two tablets, each squared off at the bottom and rounded at the top. One tablet bears Roman numerals one through five, and the other six through ten. The symbol is immediately recognizable. It stands for one of the oldest and most cherished pillars of our civilization: the Ten Commandments, which, according to the Bible, God gave to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

That symbol has been a matter of great controversy in the Court behind the wooden door, and in American culture and politics more broadly. Public displays of the Ten Commandments have been challenged repeatedly in recent years, and the ensuing jurisprudence has yielded a bewildering array of rules about where and when they may be exhibited. But these controversies have been all about the symbolism, not the substance, of the Ten Commandments. As with the version on the door of the Court, with its numerals but no text, we have come to think of the Ten Commandments as an abstraction standing in for all of Judaism and Christianity, and of their display in public as a large and assertive statement of faith.

The Ten Commandments themselves, though, are not a symbol. They are ten specific statements of principle, which lay out very particular requirements and prohibitions. The fight over the Ten Commandments has been full of spectacle and irony—as defenders of civil liberties have argued for censorship and religious fundamentalists have demanded freedom of expression and worship—but it has been almost entirely devoid of any reference to the particular substance of the Ten Commandments.

In his new book, *Shattered Tablets*, David Klinghoffer worries that we have lost sight of that substance more generally. We ignore the Ten Commandments, he believes, not just in our struggles over religious expression, but in our lives, as individuals and as a nation; and doing so carries great risks.

Klinghoffer, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute in Seattle and a former literary editor of National Review, is a pious and intellectually serious convert to Judaism who has written several books on questions of God and man. His concern in this book is with America's fading commitment to God and to the moral code of our Judeo-Christian heritage—a code he believes is well encapsulated in the Ten Commandments.

The book has two aspirations: first to show just what the commandments actually mean, and second to show how America's abandonment of them points to disaster. It carries off its first aim well, with force and erudition. But it falls far short of making the case for the second, stretching and reaching to find fault with every facet of American life, and missing the rich and sturdy religious spirit of the nation that is, if anything, the last best hope for the Judeo-Christian traditions.

At its best, the book serves as a guided tour of the commandments themselves. Each of its ten chapters treats one commandment, thinking through the Hebrew injunction, asking why the commandment in question should be given such prominence, and suggesting what role it might play in the moral life of a society. It dispels any notion that the commandments are anachronisms. Klinghoffer shows, for example, how "taking the Lord's name in vain" was understood by the prophets and the Jewish sages in a way that makes it powerfully relevant to the present day, and how the call to observe the Sabbath speaks to problems we mistakenly think of as new and unprecedented.

The overarching conceit of these analyses is that the division of the Ten Commandments into two tablets of five tells us something critically important about how to read them. "If the main point I hope to leave you with in this book can be crystallized in one sentence," Klinghoffer writes, "it is that how people think about God, which is the general topic of the first five commandments, determines a society's moral health, which is the subject of the second five." Understood this way, the two tablets are to be read horizontally as well as vertically, so that the first and sixth commandments (that God is Lord, and that murder is prohibited) should be understood together, as should the second and seventh (the prohibitions on idolatry and adultery), and so on.

At times, this analytical device is wonderfully clarifying. Klinghoffer's connection of idol worship and the betrayal of the marriage vow, for instance, sheds great light on both, and makes masterly use of both the ancient Jewish sources and the latest headlines. But at other times, this device forces Klinghoffer to stretch his argument to the breaking point, or else to make a patently weak case to force a complex picture into a neat and simple pattern. To the arrangement of the fourth commandment (to keep the Sabbath) across from the ninth (against offering false witness), for instance, he has nothing more to say than that in a society that routinely violates one we should expect to see the other ignored as well.

Klinghoffer also seeks to help us see how the commandments might speak to the most pressing matters of our day—how the Bible's notion of paganism relates in complex but illuminating ways to some forms of modern secularism, for

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instance. But these contemporary applications are also where the book too often gets carried away. In his eagerness to show that we are straying from the path laid out in the commandments, Klinghoffer paints far too dark a picture, and often strains for examples. After a fascinating discussion of the notion of "spiritual adultery," for instance, he reaches for a modern illustration and comes up with this peculiar formulation:

> A great day for such spiritual adultery was October 3, 1965. In New York City, sheltered beneath the Statue of Liberty, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Immigration and Nationality Act. The act opened America's gates wide to immigrants, whose numbers previously had been restricted, immigrants bringing with them—beside the gift of their talents and love of freedom—a variety of religions that previously had, for the most part, been unknown in the United States.

He then argues that American religion will be overrun by the heathen faiths (his term) of these immigrants. Some other contemporary examples do not fare much better. Klinghoffer argues that the popularity of Wicca among confused young snobs in the Pacific Northwest portends a pagan awakening in America. He equates all gambling with theft, and insists upon a simple opposition of Darwinian biology and Biblical religion, calling those who accept Darwin's doctrine "our day's most prominent opponents of the first commandment."

With all of these examples, Klinghoffer aims to argue that America is sprinting toward Gomorrah, suffering gross decay and decline in every facet of public, private, civic, moral, and spiritual life. By the time it reaches the concluding chapter, called "The Wayward City," the book has descended into a grumpy jeremiad, and lost sight of all the many ways in which America still stands as a shining example of how Judeo-Christian culture, with the Ten Commandments at its core, can make for a strong and thriving society. There are, after all, two sides to the battle around public displays of the Decalogue, and there are everywhere around us examples of religious awakening, moral courage, and civic virtue.

There is certainly some truth to Klinghoffer's basic case about the Ten Commandments, that "these ten great statements about reality reveal the gravest threat America faces—not from terrorism, global warming, or pandemic influenza, but from our own vapid ideas about God, morality, and the meaning of life." But he despairs too easily and thoroughly. The greatest threat to the West today is indeed that we might lose confidence in our civilization, by losing our grasp of just what it stands for. But surely America remains the foremost bulwark against that grave threat, and not the leading exhibit of its gravity. Along with examples of how we fail to observe the commandments, Klinghoffer's book—and his effort to clarify the meaning of the commandments themselves—would have benefited from examples of where we succeed in meeting their high standards.

In the end, though, this book does a great service by its thoughtful and well-articulated conception of the Ten Commandments as broad public and private principles, and not just simple, narrow rules. Klinghoffer puts the matter plainly. "Belief forms behavior," he writes; "in three words that is the thesis of this book." It is a wise and timely thesis, and a valuable book. **NR**

The Known Unknowns

Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't, by John R. Lott Jr. (Regnery, 256 pp., $27.95)

JIM MANZI

ECONOMISTS John Lott and Steven Levitt are in the midst of a feud of somewhat operatic proportions, and Lott's recent book *Freedomnomics*—billed as a direct reply to Levitt's massive bestseller *Freakonomics*—is the latest salvo. It has one great strength that is undercut by two weaknesses.

The strength of *Freedomnomics* is Lott's defense of the spontaneous order

Mr. Manzi is the CEO of an applied-artificial-intelligence software company.

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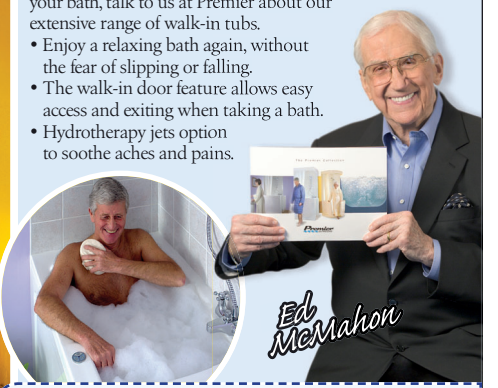

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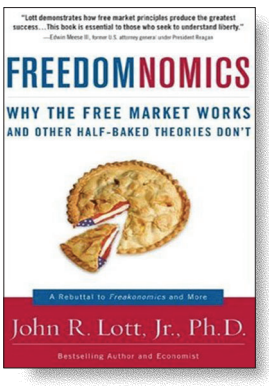
generated by the interlocking improvisations of people who do things like run restaurants and sell real estate. Lott has clearly spent time listening to them, and he is at his most convincing when he uses these conversations to provide simple but devastating counter-examples to Levitt's broad assertions.

For example, Levitt claimed that a car loses as much as a quarter of its value as it leaves the dealership because any potential buyer would assume that it must be a lemon if it is put up for sale right away. Lott found a pretty simple way to falsify this theory: He reports that he looked up the price of 50 used cars with very few miles on them, and discovered that they actually sell for more like a 3 percent discount to new. Lott goes on to outline such practical mechanisms as refunds and transferable warranties that have been developed to get around the perceived-lemon problem, and makes the sensible observation that obvious, sustained profit opportunities tend to get converted into businesses.


"Lott demonstrates how free market principles produce the greatest success....This book is essential to those who seek to understand liberty."
FREEDOMNOMICS
WHY THE FREE MARKET WORKS AND OTHER HALF-BAKED THEORIES DON'T
A Rebuttal to Freakonomics and More
John R. Lott, Jr., Ph.D.
Bestselling Author and Economist

The first weakness of *Freedomnomics* is simply an understandable excess of zeal. Levitt's shtick that most business transactions are hidden con games can get pretty annoying in its tone of moral superiority (to businesspeople) and intellectual superiority (to their customers), but Lott's counter-descriptions of human behavior in the face of economic incentives are often unrealistically sunny. Both authors can come across as surprisingly naïve about how real markets work.

Levitt made the argument that realtors take advantage of their customers by trying to get houses sold quickly, rather than holding out for the best price. His evidence was that realtors tend to keep their own houses on the market ten days longer and sell them for 3 percent more than those of their clients. (With this bill of indictment, Levitt's explicit and extended analogy between realtors and the KKK seems a little overheated.)

Lott responds by putting forward nonnefarious possible explanations for this 3 percent price difference, and continues by explaining the economic role of a middleman, including an extensive discussion of why it is often rational for a service provider to forgo some short-term profits to maintain a good reputation. Lott goes too far though: He paints a picture of a typical realtor that sounds more like Mother Teresa than anybody who has ever sold a house for me.

My reaction to the whole debate is that anybody who thinks it's news that realtors generally try to talk the seller down and the buyer up in order to close the deal has a standing invitation to my regular Tuesday-night poker game.

The second weakness of *Freedomnomics* is more fundamental, and is shared with *Freakonomics*: Both authors oversell their ability to analyze society mathematically. They repeatedly fall into the trap of mistaking correlation for causality.

Levitt's most notorious conclusion in *Freakonomics* was that a significant fraction of U.S. crime reduction in the 1990s was actually caused by changes that *Roe* v. *Wade* set in motion 20 years earlier. The primary evidence offered for this in the main section of his book was that the five states that liberalized abortion laws prior to *Roe* experienced a crime reduction prior to the states that did not. Presumably recognizing that this is not exactly the Michelson-Morley experiment, he then tried to buttress his conclusion by referencing ancillary, even less persuasive, analyses: one showing that the states with the highest abortion rates in the 1970s experienced the greatest crime drops in the 1990s, and a second showing that for states with high abortion rates, the entire decline in crime was among the post-*Roe* cohort. Finally, he magisterially stated that Australia and Canada have seen similar results.

Lott devotes considerable space in *Freedomnomics* to attacking Levitt's analysis of this issue. Lott slightly changed the data set that Levitt used in his relevant academic papers, through such adjustments as more closely linking the date of a murderer's arrest with the date of his crime, and better accounting for abortions that occurred prior to legalization. When the same methodology was applied to these data, Lott found that more abortions appeared to *increase* crime. Lott also references an independent paper by two Federal Reserve economists that demonstrated Levitt had failed to conduct a specific analysis that he had asserted was done in his most prominent academic paper on abortion and crime. Once this methodological error was fixed, it appeared that abortion had very little effect on crime one way or the other. Levitt responded to this criticism by further slightly changing his own data set, primarily by estimating the degree to which people moved between states in order to track effects across state lines. Not shockingly, he found that his original relationship partially reappeared when he used this reworked data set.

Levitt wrote that *Roe* is "like the proverbial butterfly that flaps its wings on one continent and eventually creates a hurricane on another." He ought to be more careful with his similes: Surely he knew that he was echoing meteorologist Edward Lorenz's famous evocation of a global climate system—one that had such a dense web of interconnected pathways of causation that it made long-term weather forecasting a fool's errand. The actual event that inspired this observation was that, one day in 1961, Lorenz entered .506 instead of .506127 for one parameter in a climate-forecasting model and discovered that it produced a wildly different long-term weather forecast. This is, of course, directly analogous to what we see in the abortion-crime debate: Tiny changes in the data set yield vastly different results. This is a telltale sign (as if another were needed) that human society is far too complicated to yield to the analytical tools that Lott and Levitt bring to bear. *Nobody* in this debate has any reliable, analytically derived idea of what impact abortion legalization has had on crime.

This is not an isolated example; in fact, such analyses are essential to both books. Lott devotes almost an entire chapter of *Freedomnomics* to arguing that about one-third of 20th-century growth in government spending was caused by women's suffrage. He does this primarily by showing that those states that

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introduced women's suffrage earlier experienced an earlier growth in government spending, and supports this with other, ancillary analyses. Sound familiar? As with abortion and crime, the only responsible verdict is "unproven."

Our scientific ignorance of human society is profound. That is what makes the expensive trial-and-error processes of economic markets and political freedom—to coin a phrase, the open society—necessary. The central irony of *Freedomnomics* is that Lott wrote the book to defend the role of markets; but if human behavior were as easy to analyze as he assumes, we would have very little need for markets.

Yet this limitation is only one of argument, not one of ultimate purpose. Lott's overall point—that freedom unleashes, for the most part, beneficial human ingenuity, and not the corrupt carnival of Levitt's imagination—is both true and important. *Freedomnomics* is well worth reading as an engaging apologetic for the market economy. **NR**

Definitive Dante

Paradiso, by Dante, translated by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander (Doubleday, 915 pp., $40)

JEFFREY HART

For many years, Robert Hollander, professor of European literature at Princeton, has been working on explanatory notes for this edition of *The Divine Comedy*, and cooperating with his wife, Jean, on a verse translation. During the 1970s, because Dartmouth at that time had pioneered the academic use of computers, Hollander created the Dartmouth Dante Project, which made available the best Dante commentary since the 14th century. The Hollander *Inferno* appeared in 2000, to be followed by the *Purgatorio* in 2003. And now we have the *Paradiso*.

The consensus is firm that Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare are the three great poets of the Western world. T. S. Eliot's judgment stands: To "take the *Comedy* as a whole, you can compare it to nothing but the entire dramatic work of Shakespeare. . . . Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern [post-classical] world between them; there is no third." Homer belongs with those two great poets both for his achievement and for his civilizational importance. Greek schoolboys read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* for instruction in *arete* (excellence of character); these epics provided vivid examples of its presence or absence in particular heroes. Aristotle's *Ethics* summed this up. Plato, who wanted to be "a better teacher than Homer," established a rival form of *arete*, heroic philosophy in Socrates (see Werner Jaeger's *Paideia*). Dante brings to us the great epic of Christian pilgrimage. To these, plus Shakespeare, I would add the

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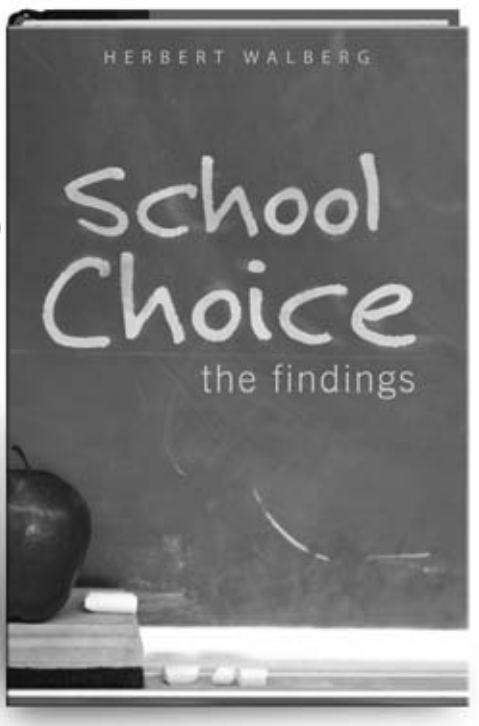

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epic of Moses, now available as *The Five Books of Moses*, translated and with indispensable notes by Robert Alter. Put all of these together and you are ready to become a citizen of the West.

For our time and for an incalculable future the Hollander edition of *The Divine Comedy* will be the one used by serious readers. When I taught the Humanities 1–2 course at Columbia during the later 1950s, we used the 1948 Sinclair edition, a prose translation that included brief explanatory notes. Charles Singleton's edition (1970–75), a prose translation with much more extensive notes, became the one used by advanced readers. Singleton has now been replaced by the Hollander edition, a verse translation with far superior notes.

Dante's terza rima is impossible to recreate satisfactorily in English, but the Hollanders have produced a fine verse substitute. Our contemporary sensibility prescribes a poetic idiom that retains the virtues of prose, and the verse here reflects this with tercets nudged into verse by their stanza form and unobtrusive meter. Let us begin with the famous opening of the *Inferno*, with the pilgrim Dante lost in the darkest of woods:

> Midway in the journey of our life
> I came to myself in a dark wood,
> for the straight way was lost.
>
> Ah, how hard it is to tell
> the nature of that wood, savage, dense
> and harsh—
> the very thought of it renews my fear!

That fifth line is hypermetric for good reasons, as is the original: *esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte.* This must be the greatest midlife crisis in history.

The pilgrim's journey out of pain, danger, and confusion will be long and hard, through Hell and purgation. Dante's first instructor is Virgil; and his portrait of Virgil here is not chiefly an allegorical device, but an admiring presentation of what the author of the *Aeneid* might indeed be like. Virgil cannot guide the pilgrim to the end, because he has no knowledge of it; so, after a moving separation from his great teacher, Dante must go on with another guide. Hollander sees that Beatrice is not an intercessor (Mary), but a rebuker, like Jesus Christ (see esp. *Purg.* 31: 25–30). Instead of using Jesus himself, which would present insuperable difficulties, Dante uses Beatrice, implying that the flawed Church of his time inhabited its own dark wood.

With knowledge that goes beyond Virgil's, Dante sets himself the problem of rising to that unique occasion, a poem about the journey through Heaven to God. Even to state his challenge must cause surprise. He is to go where no poet has ever gone before, to the source of the "Love that moves the sun and all the other stars." Is it possible to *write* about that? Babe Ruth legendarily pointed his bat at the fence beyond the outfield, and then hit the ball over that fence. In Canto 100 at the end of the *Paradiso*, Dante, in Eliot's judgment, achieved "the highest point that poetry has reached or ever can reach." A few tercets from the Hollander translation will have to suffice here:

> O Light exalted beyond mortal thought,
> grant that in memory I see again
> but one small part of how you then
> appeared . . .
>
> In its depth I saw contained,
> by love into a single volume bound,
> the pages scattered through the universe:
> . . .
> and each one seemed reflected by the
> other
> as rainbow is by rainbow, while the third
> seemed fire,
> equally breathed forth by one and by the
> other. . . .
>
> within itself and in its very color,
> to be painted with our likeness,
> so that my sight was all absorbed in it.

Splendid as this new translation is, the endlessly valuable notes are what make this edition supplant all others. The commentary here has evolved not only from extensive research but also from the famous Dante Seminar Hollander has taught at Princeton for many years; famous, yes, and famously demanding. At the annual Princeton Homecoming parade, most returning Princeton alumni march with their classes. But alumni of the Dante Seminar march as a separate group. Now that Professor Hollander has retired, a bronze plaque commemorating the Seminar has been added to his seminar room. **NR**

■ ART ■

Seeds of Renewal

ROGER KIMBALL

One of the most refreshing exhibitions I have seen this year is a group of 30 small still lifes by the startlingly good young painter Jacob Collins. That's the good news. The bad news is that the show closed July 6 at the Hirschl & Adler Galleries in New York. "Well, thanks for that," you say: "A good exhibition finally pops up and you come bearing news that we can't see the stuff." Not quite. The exhibition came and went quickly, as gallery exhibitions are wont

Mr. Kimball is co-editor and co-publisher of *The New Criterion*.

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Windows® XP for Everyone, by Jaime A. Restrepo (Xlibris, 447 pp., $24.99)

A notice to fellow patients: In re the problem of mastering Windows, I recommend what I have just been presented by my own tutor in the subject, to wit, *Windows®XP for Everyone*. It is now out in paperback from Xlibris, and is a masterfully designed, user-friendly guide to the world's continuing most-popular operating system.

—WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

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to do, but you can still go to Hirschl & Adler—21 East 70th Street—and ask to have a peek at some of Collins's work. They generally have a lot of it on hand. Make the trip. You won't be sorry. Collins is one of the most prodigious painters on the current scene. More than that, he is laboring mightily to help remake what counts as the current scene.

I first became aware of Jacob Collins last year shortly before he exhibited a group of portraits—oils and drawings—at Hirschl & Adler. I found his combination of visual exuberance and technical command breathtaking and immensely gratifying. That's a rare experience these days. Open the lexicon of praise routinely consulted by contemporary art critics: At least since the triumph of Abstract Expressionism, what you find is an odd assortment of adjectives, beginning with such lo-cal terms as "interesting," "taut," "strong," "remarkable," and proceeding up (or perhaps down) the moral ladder to epithets such as "challenging" and (the all-time favorite) "transgressive." What you almost never hear is a work praised for its beauty, its artistry, its humanity; for the pleasure it gives. The truth is, most contemporary art critics soon find themselves becoming masters of excuse-making: Artist A's painting is "bold" (i.e., poorly drawn) while B's is "original" (i.e., repellent *and* poorly drawn). In this age of demotic Dadaism, criticism more and more becomes a quest for extenuating circumstances.

Collins, now in his mid-forties, is a leading proponent of Classical Realism, a movement that seeks to put the artistry back into art and to take us back behind, beyond, the deformations of Dada and its many unlovely progeny. He and his colleagues create art that needs no excuses, no alibis, no apologies. It is art that is confident, accomplished, and traditional, understanding that last word in a positive, enabling sense, not as a term of diminishment.

Classical Realism is a relatively new movement, and it is too early to say with confidence what its influence on contemporary taste will be. I suspect it will be large. Collins and his fellow Classical Realists are seeking to foment a revolution—more precisely, a counter-revolution—in art by reinvigorating, reinhabiting, the aesthetic canons and plastic techniques pioneered in the Renaissance and promulgated in the studios of the Beaux Arts.

Will they succeed? It is hard to say. In order to do so, what they require are not just private victories but public acquiescence, critical understanding and celebration. There are some auspicious signs, from the growing impatience of the public with the antics of a degraded art world to the fructifying energy and talent of many of the artists associated with Classical Realism. The movement is a proselytizing coterie, actively seeking allies, converts, the future. Many of its most accomplished practitioners, Collins among them, expend nearly as much time and energy on teaching as they do on their own work. (At last count, Collins had started two schools and was involved with several others.)

Are there things to criticize about Classical Realism? Of course. Every species of art must conjure with its characteristic occupational deformations. For much contemporary art, deformation by politics or some other extra-aesthetic passion is the defining temptation. For much contemporary figurative painting—especially, perhaps, for movements such as Classical Realism—the governing temptation is kitsch.

What is kitsch? A lot of ink has been expended in the effort to define this amphibious aesthetic-moral term. Kitsch flirts with idealism, but it is an idealism gone rancid. It is a version of sentimentality, which is to say it trades in manufactured sentiment in the face of a failure of genuine feeling. Kitsch is histrionic, self-dramatizing. Its confections can be sweet: I think, for example, of John Currin's diabetic fantasies. They can also be sour: I would include some of the grimmer fabulations of the Norwegian painter Odd Nerdrum in this category. As the case of Nerdrum suggests, technical command is no barrier to, and might even be a facilitator of, kitsch. At its core is a failure of nerve that is also a rejection of truth.

'Butter with Bread'

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Kitsch describes one variety of failed art. Curiously, though, it is also the case that the most ambitious art must have the courage to flirt with kitsch, to negotiate that passage between sterility and sentimentality. There are no formulas, no certain navigational aids, for this voyage. The sine qua non is that most demanding of gifts, taste. The exercise of taste is what elevates a traditional artistic practice from the quaintly antiquarian to the inescapably pertinent. Success in this realm is not only something that must be won anew daily, it is something about which judgment will often vary or be withheld indefinitely.

In my view, Collins occasionally exhibits a sweet tooth for histrionic lighting that undercuts his achievement by introducing an element of melodrama bordering on kitsch. (This is evident in some of his more ambitious portraits and, in a quieter register, in still lifes such as "Clementine" and "Orange.")

Nevertheless, Collins generally negotiates these perilous waters with uncanny skill. Still lifes such as "Butter with Bread," "Dark Chocolate," and "Lisianthus" (all 2007) are not only technical gems, but also testaments to painterly decorum and refinement. These are not minor virtues. Part of the successful exercise of taste is a command of decorum. Deliberate assaults on decorum have been a trademark feature of avant-garde (and pseudo-avant-garde) art for more than a century. Collins shows his maturity as well as his mastery in his carefully modulated sense of decorum.

Writing about an earlier exhibition of Collins's work at Hirschl & Adler, art historian John T. Spike noted that under "Education" the artist gave pride of place to "Museum copying: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Louvre, Prado, Uffizi." In a way, that says it all. In one of his gnomic apothegms, the Greek sage Heraclitus said that the way forward is the way back. Jacob Collins is an artistic pioneer. But as the recent splendid exhibition demonstrated, he has the wit to know that the most demanding mysteries are those that are inseparable from our fragile, human nature. The newest realities are also the oldest, the freshest art the most perennial. Jacob Collins is the real thing. Criticism isn't prophecy, but I will end with a prediction: You'll be hearing more, a lot more, about him in the years to come. **NR**

■ MUSIC ■

High Art & Low Taxes

JAY NORDLINGER

Salzburg, Austria

Last year, the Salzburg Festival staged the mother of all Mozart blowouts: It was his 250th birthday, you know. This year, things are more normal, with a variety of composers in the showcase. Not that Wolfi is banished altogether.

You may ask, "What *is* the Salzburg Festival?" and you are perfectly entitled. This is, by general agreement, the most prestigious music festival in the world. (There's theater, too, but we'll pass over that.) One of the publicists here says, "The Salzburg Festival is to classical music what Cannes is to films." The comparison may be a little cheesy, but it's not inapt.

Amid the many musical performances are performances of another kind: a series of public interviews, with stars of the festival, and stars of music today. They are sponsored by the Salzburg Festival Society, and conducted by an interloper from National Review, moonlighting from the anti-Hillary wars (and other wars). The interviewees are a conductor and a string of singers. And first in the chair is that conductor: Valery Gergiev, the mercurial Russian.

He has about four specific posts—e.g., principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra—but he might be thought of as "general music director of the world": He crisscrosses the globe in an endless series of engagements. Gergiev may have replaced the late James Brown as "the hardest-working man in show business." I also think of a joke, told about another late musician, Herbert von Karajan (for 30 years lord of the Salzburg Festival): He hails a taxi, and the driver says, "Where to?" Karajan answers, "It doesn't matter: I'm in demand everywhere."

In the Festival Pavilion, Gergiev talks fascinatingly about Russia, the Soviet Union, contemporary music, the art of conducting: "A conductor is like a CEO. You need the quality of leadership." And a bad conductor, he says, can take an orchestra that has been 100 years in the making and wreck it in two months.

The worst thing a conductor can be, he later notes, is boring. That is also the second- and third-worst things he can be. He remembers attending a performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* in Paris, and being bored out of his mind after 20 minutes. The conductor (unnamed, of course—although I have an idea) was meticulous and correct. Gergiev does a funny imitation. But the man was completely without inspiration, letting the music lie flat on the page. Gergiev wanted badly to leave, but had to wait until the end of the first act, an hour and a half later. His departure would have caused a stink.

In the course of our talk, Gergiev mentions Puccini in a positive context, and I remark that some people—ignoramuses—sneer at Puccini as a corny melodist: a musical candymaker. Gergiev virtually spits in contempt. Yes, he says, and they say the same thing about Tchaikovsky, and even about Mozart: "The music is so pretty and simple." There are weak pieces in every composer's corpus, and you can always perform a work in a daft, undermining way.

But, he continues, composers such as Puccini, Verdi, and Wagner are popular for a reason: They speak to people in every time and place, forever.

And Gergiev himself is in love with music. But aren't they all? Don't all professional musicians love music? No, actually—certainly not like Gergiev does. He remembers being 14 and putting on a recording of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. Then he heard a Tchaikovsky opera: *Pique Dame* (*The Queen of Spades*). And then a Tchaikovsky symphony, No. 4, in the recording by Yevgeny Mravinsky and the Leningrad Philharmonic (a phenomenally bracing recording). And he was hooked. He knew that he had to have a life in music—and, boy, has he.

Next in our series is Ferruccio Furlanetto, the Italian bass. And what a beautiful speaking voice he has! Almost as beautiful—as rich, glowing, and musical—as his singing voice. Most singers don't especially sound like singers, when they talk; they are pretty much normal.

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But, hearing Furlanetto say hello, you know he has to be a singer. And he's the best golfer in music, by the way.

A second "by the way": I ask him what he listens to at home. He names just one singer, and not an opera singer: Paul Simon. Forget technique, vocal quality, etc. "He sings from the heart." And the most important element in singing, says Furlanetto, is heart.

When his turn comes, Michael Schade, the German-Canadian tenor, drives up in a sporty red convertible. (The only kind of red convertible there is, I know.) And he takes us through an enlightening and entertaining hour, complete with his patented imitation of Riccardo Muti, the Italian conductor: Schade has our audience in stitches. Fourth to be interviewed is Diana Damrau, the German soprano, who in her relatively brief career has made the entire world swoon. The world is right, too.

Damrau is sparkling, whimsical, smart, funny, striking. She has a giggle—way up high in her range—that won't quit. I have described her as a combination of Lucille Ball and Grace Kelly. She is sort of a goofball beauty, and a major talent—a first-class singer—to boot.

Capping our series is another soprano: Renée Fleming, a daughter of Rochester, N.Y. After Plácido Domingo—who is also milling about the Salzburg Festival, incidentally—she is probably the most famous opera singer in the world. And, early in our discussion, I ask her about fame.

It is my view that Beverly Sills, who passed on in July, was somewhat penalized for her fame, which was enormous. Critics, cognoscenti, and other suspect types could be incredibly snarky about her. Sills was in the odd position of being wildly famous and at the same time underrated. I believe that a similar phenomenon surrounds Renée Fleming. What does the diva herself think?

She answers judiciously, and wisely: "With celebrity comes mistrust," even if that mistrust has no foundation. "People may think you have less integrity than others, or a less genuine interest in music." They also give you demerits for singing opera arias in concert, instead of non-operatic literature alone. Well, nuts to that, says Fleming, and thank heaven she does. It is also undeniable that she is the target of that age-old human shortcoming: envy.

O little town of music

FRITZ HASEKE

She does not seem the least affected by it, though.

We turn to the subject of vocal technique, and I'm particularly interested in her breathing: She's one of the great breathers in singing. I have frequently written, "She seems to have an abdomen from Gold's Gym." The word from Fleming herself? She insists she's nothing compared with Dmitri Hvorostovsky, the Russian baritone. "He must have a third lung. I mean, he can tie phrases together that have no business being tied together. He does things that are humanly impossible."

But she admits to something that happened in rehearsal, earlier in the day. She is singing Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the Vienna Philharmonic, conducted by Daniel Harding. So, Harding said to her, "Don't you ever breathe? I see all these breath marks in the score. But you just sing through them. I guess I'll just have to ignore them."

Talking about technique, Fleming says something memorable about Luciano Pavarotti: "His technique was perfect. *Absolutely perfect*." It may well be that the Voice of the Century was also the Technique of the Century. When you think of Pavarotti, you may remember the schlocky, mugging guy of later years. But the earlier recordings and videos will devour that image.

And Fleming will be immortalized through her own recordings and videos. (In addition, she has a dessert named after her, like her soprano predecessor, Nellie Melba. No toast, though.) At the end of our hour, I ask her a clichéd question, but not a bad one: Do you have anything left on your to-do list? Any roles you want to take on, any repertoire you need to learn and perform? Fleming says that, if she had to stop singing tomorrow, she would have no regrets. She wouldn't be particularly happy about it—about having to stop singing. But she would have no regrets. She has

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"sung her songs," to quote an old lyric.

Above, I mentioned that I'm leaving politics alone, while absent from NR. But politics won't necessarily leave *you* alone, particularly at the Salzburg Festival. Take Falk Richter's production of Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* (please).

Carl Maria von Weber wrote this opera in 1821; Richter rewrote it this year. The opera is a "singspiel," meaning that it combines spoken dialogue with singing and orchestral playing. Richter has the characters leave German for English, to convey his special messages. Late in Act II, he has Kaspar—an acolyte of Samiel, the devil figure—say this:

"Destruction, death, corruption, rape, war, invasion, burnt children, low taxes, and religion—that is what we would kill for; that is what our hearts yearn for."

Yes, low taxes, to go with burned children and religion. Herr Richter is apparently not a supply-sider. Friends, there is much more in this production that is wrong, hateful, and vile. But I just wanted to give you that little taste. European stage directors are a closed circle, absolute prisoners of their miseducation. They love to cry against America, against liberal democracy, against Judeo-Christian civilization itself.

Oh, well: You have to wish them luck under sharia. **NR**

PLACE IN THE ROAD

I only just felt the body shiver through the car's frame:
a second's interruption, then that sorry, sick feeling.

How stupid it all seems.
They streak across the road—
something I would never do.

And yet—

I'd snatch a child from danger,
dash into the road, give my life for a child's.
Or for *X* over there, whom I hate.

I'd like to be free of the only thing I know.
Wouldn't you give up your life, too?
Wouldn't you want even a stranger to have it?

Doesn't it seem as though the breath could catch fire
for the first time in your life?
Your hand would know just where to go,

down into your pocket. You'd pull out your life
like a handful of bright change
and say, "Here."

"Here is light. Now give me darkness,"

without wondering who you are to flash light
around. And then everywhere you look—across the highway
or into the sky with its long loose lease

on your life—the skin of darkness is abraded
and wears thin, so that even when it bears down on you,
it makes you feel, for a moment,
so alive.

—TED GILLEY

■ FILM ■

Boys to Men

ROSS DOUTHAT

The day will come when Judd Apatow, instead of turning out shaggy, sidesplitting portraits of contemporary masculinity, finds himself directing a bad, big-budget sequel to a movie that wasn't all that great to begin with—*Balls to the Wall 2*, say, with Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson reprising their roles as dueling jai-alai players, or *Wickeder Wickets: The Saga of Carruthers Carstairs Continues*, starring Sacha Baron Cohen as a snobby-but-lovable croquet champion. The day will come when Seth Rogen, Apatow's frequent star, will stop playing hilarious manchildren and make a bid to become a "serious" actor—by taking a part as an angry, paraplegic Iraq War vet in Sean Penn's adaptation of Scott Thomas Beauchamp's first novel, perhaps, or as a racist cop who falls in love with a black transvestite migrant worker in Paul Haggis's 2012 Oscar-winner *They're Gonna Wash Us Away*, a searing look at race relations in post-Katrina New Orleans. The day will come when Michael Cera and Jonah Hill, the young headliners of the Apatow-produced, Rogen-written *Superbad*, get their own dreadful vanity projects—the former directing and starring in *U.P.*, an art-house effort about a failed screenwriter who returns to his hometown in Michigan's Upper Peninsula to reconnect with his parents; the latter taking top billing in *Jonah and the Whale*, a relentlessly unfunny ABC sitcom costarring a gone-to-seed Britney Spears (but I repeat myself) as Hill's white-trash wife.

Never, you say? Ah, but it will—as surely as Harold Ramis went from helming *Caddyshack* to directing *Analyze That*; as surely as the Steve Martin of *The Jerk* become the Steve Martin of *Cheaper by the Dozen*; as surely as Steve Carell, so hilarious in *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *The Office*, will be appearing in this fall's *Dan in Real Life*, a glossy, "heartfelt" dramedy co-starring Juliette Binoche; as surely as Will Ferrell, the

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funniest man in America, felt the need to woo Nicole Kidman in the awful revision of *Bewitched*, or go dour and dramatic for semi-indie efforts like *Stranger Than Fiction* and *Winter Passing*; as surely as Robin Williams—well, need I say more?

I need not, I think, which is why audiences with a strong stomach for profanity, lechery, and general adolescent-male disgustingness should savor the Apatow-Rogen axis of funny while it lasts. *Superbad*, their latest collaboration—it's directed, with studious self-effacement, by one Greg Mottola, but it's an Apatow production all the way—is a modest movie, a variation on a well-worn theme: The awkward, virginal leads, Seth (the chunky, motormouthed Hill) and Evan (the long-limbed Cera, a master of the uncomfortable, deadpan murmur), face various obstacles in their quest to get drunk and get lucky before high school slouches to an end. But for all its familiarity, *Superbad* is more of a companion piece to *Knocked Up* and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* than a retread of *Porky's* or *American Pie*. Apatow's comedies, David Denby wrote recently in *The New Yorker*, are elegies for "the dissolution of a male pack, the ending of the juvenile male bond," and this one is no exception. *Superbad*'s primary concern isn't the hunt for booze and "ladies," ultimately, but the looming adulthood that threatens Seth and Evan's teenage bond—the shadow of the Fall darkening their dork's Eden.

As a picaresque romp, the movie isn't all that it might have been. Seth and Evan's misadventures on the way to a graduation party run parallel to the even wilder night enjoyed by their even geekier pal Fogell (Christopher Mintz-Plasse, as perfectly awkward as his name), whose fake-ID-assisted quest to buy booze lands him in a squad car with the world's least law-abiding policemen, played by Rogen and Bill Hader. The men in blue get Fogell liquored up and teach him to shoot at street signs (as a bullet pings away into the night, a siren wails to life in the distance; "The cops!" the cops burst out in terror, and flee the scene), while Seth and Evan find their way into the third circle of suburban Hell, trying to filch booze from a party full of coked-up, fistfighting twentysomethings. There are plenty of laughs here, but the kooky policemen overstay their welcome, and the protagonists' nightmarish detour has a Grand Guignol quality that feels slightly out-of-place: It's Apatow's usual adultescent canvas, but with a weird touch of Robert Rodriguez creeping in around the edges. (I kept expecting someone to get shot, or turn into a vampire, or some combination thereof.)

Jonah Hill and Michael Cera in Superbad

SONY PICTURES

What makes *Superbad* so successful, then, is less the pratfalls and set-pieces than the pitch-perfect interpersonal stuff: the awkward rhythm of Evan and Seth's conversation with the girls they're hoping to seduce (Martha MacIsaac and a wonderfully droll Emma Stone); the three's-company tension between Seth, Evan, and Fogell, a painful example of the hierarchies that exist *within* the world of dorks; and above all the bond between the two male leads, which is threatened by college (Evan got into Dartmouth; Seth didn't) and by the tug of female companionship, but which proves strong enough to survive the longest night of their young lives.

"I love you," they tell each other drunkenly, curled up on sleeping bags in Evan's mother's basement, their disastrous encounters with the feminine safely behind them. (This is a rare—and realistic!—teen sex comedy in which nobody actually has sex.) "Why don't we say it all the time?" Seth asks. "I want to shout it from the rooftops!" Evan returns. The moment is hilarious and poignant in equal measure, as is the separation that follows the next day, in which the entire Apatow worldview is compressed into the mute, longing look that passes between the male leads. His movies are endorsements of adulthood, not permanent adolescence, but they're also reminders that growing up means giving things up, and that the era of shotgunning beer in your best friend's parents' rec room has a seriousness all its own, which is exceeded but not undone by the adulthood that replaces it. **NR**

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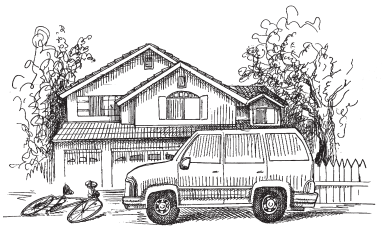
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Fled Is That Music



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

THERE is a specter haunting the Straggler household. The specter is not actually very spectral in form. It is, as a matter of fact, a large solid object weighing several hundred pounds, and occupying a prominent position in the living room. Still, it is haunting us—making us uneasy by its mere presence, robbing us of peace, calling to our minds past hopes and joys, now all gone with the wind.

Perhaps I should not over-dramatize. The issue here is child-raising; the child, my son, recently turned twelve; the specter, our family piano. Like all good bourgeois parents—and no doubt many bohemian ones, too—we wanted our kids to be able to play some musical instruments. Neither Straggler parent can do so. We both came to serious music too late in life to properly acquaint ourselves with it, and we both regret this. The children, we resolved early on, would get full exposure to music, and would play one instrument apiece, at least.

With our daughter, the first child, everything went according to plan. We started her at age five on the violin, under the inscrutable ministrations of a local Japanese lady and the much more distant spiritual influence of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki (who, I am mildly surprised to learn from Wikipedia, had only just died, aged 99). Now, nine years later, our lass plays the violin as naturally as she walks, and her practices fill the house with lovely sound. Girls, as everyone says, are so much easier.

We started the boy out on a small electronic keyboard at age six. He seemed to like it, or at least not to mind it (it is not always easy to know what's going on inside a first-grader's head), so we rolled the dice and bought an upright piano. I understand now that the boy's infant brain had taken the keyboard lessons to be a transient feature of life's pageant, like a bout of influenza or a trip abroad. With the arrival of the piano, and parental grumbling about how much it had cost, and the discipline of weekly lessons and daily practices, it dawned on him that this was to be something that would *go on forever*.

Signs of rebellion came up. There were tears and scenes. Bribes were proposed, threats were made, deals were cut. After a couple of years of this parent-child diplomacy, I began to feel that settling the problems of the Middle East could not be so difficult after all. Thinking that the boy might respond better to a male teacher, we dismissed the kindly, patient old spinster who had carried him from "Twinkle, Twinkle" to "Für Elise," and hired a breezy young man . . . who failed to show up after the fourth lesson. Of his successors, the only one to make much impression was Tanya, a fierce Bulgarian lady who terrified the boy so much he performed in a recital for her, but who then moved to New York City.

Now we have given up. The strain in family life from the daily fights over practice, the embarrassment of dealing with resisted instructors, the boy's unbending hostility—now entering its seventh year—to the whole business, has broken our resolve. Lessons and practice have been suspended "for the rest of the summer." We all understand that the cessation is permanent, and that one day this fall people will come to take away the piano. It takes a while to fully internalize such severances, though. We are still, as psychobabblers say, "in denial."

I will confess, too, that I have a sneaking admiration for the boy's spirit in struggling against the pressure to do something he really does not want to do. We all, of course, must do things we don't want to do. Quite long stretches of life consist of little else. Children must learn this. The spirit that struggles against it, though—the spirit of ornery rebellion against impositions on one's time and inclinations—is one of the most precious human faculties. If it were allowed free rein, no organization, not even a family, could function; but if it were altogether stifled, liberty would soon follow it to the grave, and human beings would be nothing but driven sheep. My boy will never grace the stage of Carnegie Hall, but he has learned to kick against the pricks, and knows that the world can be shaped by dogged efforts of will, in defiance of all authority.

Am I only consoling myself for my weakness? I don't think so. Human beings are not, after all, infinitely malleable. No one who has raised a child could think so. A human personality has a grain, like wood, that cannot be ignored. The trick with raising kids is to discover their grain, their innate inclinations, and encourage those that are healthful and civilizationally positive.

Will anything remain from all those hundreds of hours at the keyboard? Here Mom and Dad differ. Mom thinks there will be some lasting benefit, that her son might even return to the piano one day. Dad, ever the reductionist, inclines to the view that we have only been pouring water onto a sheet of glass. My boy's future recollections of the piano will, I suspect, resemble those of travel writer Jan Morris. In her wonderfully dyspeptic essay on Vienna, Morris plumbed the darkest, coldest depths of her antipathy to the city when visiting Beethoven's grave at the Zentralfriedhof: "Yet even this grand sanctuary did not make my heart race, or inspire me to heroic yearnings: for with the gilded lyre upon its headstone, its old German lettering and its generally metronomic or Edition Peters manner, it reminded me horribly of piano practice." (The Straggler connection is more apt than it seems. When Morris commenced piano practice at age four, s/he was still James.)

Meanwhile football practice has begun, there is a new school year to be prepared for, and the boy has read all twelve books in the Darren Shan saga with keen pleasure. Nor is music altogether a lost cause: He played trumpet in the school band last year, and assures us he will continue to do so. There is only the piano to dispose of. "Can we put it in the driveway and smash it up with hammers?" No, son. You can't expect to love every aspect of the civilization you have inherited, but you must at least show respect. **NR**

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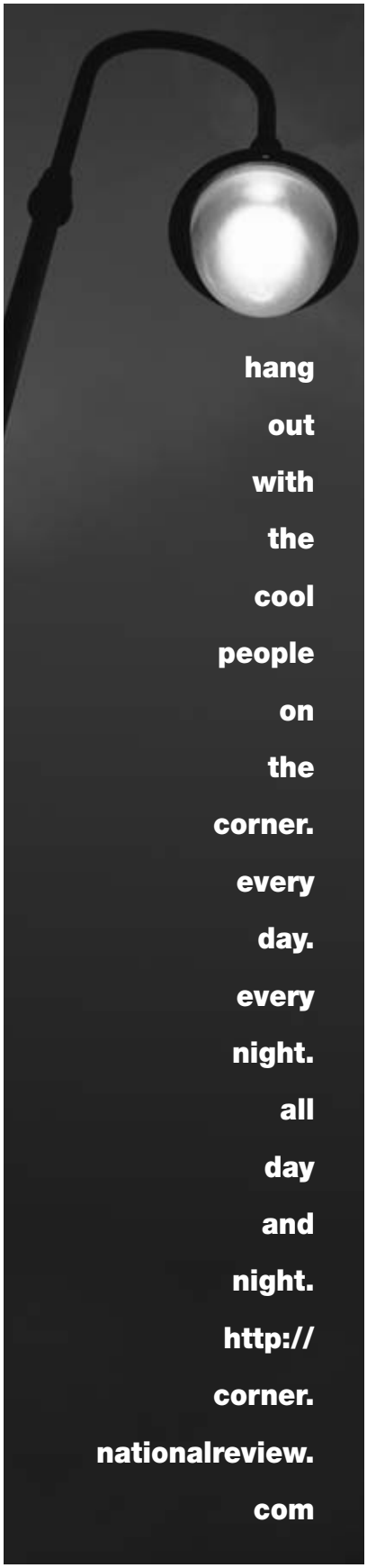

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Vanishing Footprint

My little grade school in New Hampshire recently introduced an exciting new fun project for its pupils: It will be tracking its carbon footprint!

Sorry, let me make that even more exclamatory: It will be tracking its *carbon footprint!!!!!!!*

Do even impressionable seven-year-olds still get excited about this racket? The easiest way to reduce the school district's carbon footprint would be to return to the one-room schoolhouses my older neighbors attended and which are still standing around town, with their blackboards and even the desks mostly intact. Aside from cleaning out the woodstove, you'd need nothing more than a fresh box of chalk and some new slates—and, although those 19th-century Grade Four history exercises are a bit daunting for kids weaned on the graphics-enhanced pabulum of "Social Sciences," if it shrivels our carbon footprint, I say let's do it!

But I don't expect that's what the school has in mind. Instead, there'll be some marginal going-through-the-motions-type stuff that'll make everyone feel virtuous and Gore-compliant, and that'll be that.

We are enjoined, constantly, to think globally, act locally. But in practice we do very little in the way of global thinking. Now why would that be? I'm not unsympathetic to those who favor a constitutional amendment prohibiting all baby boomers from public office. It's amazing to me how many institutions remain entirely in thrall to the received wisdom of 40 years ago—scarcity of "resources," world "overpopulation," the growing "inequality" between the rich countries and the "Third World."

None of these things exist. The U.N. now says the planet's population will peak in mid-century, and in many parts of the developed world it's already in decline: The problem Germany faces, for example, is not "sustainable growth" but sustainable lack of growth. Meanwhile, the last three decades have seen the emergence of what Prof. Xavier Sala-i-Martin calls "a new world middle class" made up of over 2.5 billion people in developing lands who now have a standard of living near enough that of the West. So about half the folks in the so-called "poor countries" are, in fact, doing pretty nicely. As Virginia Postrel put it, if you take the planet as a whole, in 1998 "the largest number of people earned about $8,000—a standard of living equivalent to Portugal's."

There is no "Third World." There is no "Africa." There is Mauritius, which is now an upscale vacation destination. And there is Liberia, where drug-fueled gangs of machete-wielding adolescents terrorize shantytowns, and changes of government are marked by the ceremonial feeding of the outgoing president's ears to himself and of his genitalia to the incoming president (on the grounds that the former leader's powers are contained therein. Which would certainly add a bit of culinary variety to the New Hampshire primary's rubber-chicken circuit).

And then there's Somalia, where, as Prof. Peter Leeson of George Mason University points out, functioning government collapsed in 1991. And yet in the 16 years since, by almost every measurable indicator, life has improved: extreme poverty down 20 percent, infant mortality down 24 percent, access to health facilities up 25 percent, measles fatalities down 30 percent, maternal mortality down over 30 percent. I hate to sound like a fainthearted moderate squish, but even we small-government conservatives don't usually have anything quite so drastic as the Somali model in mind. Still, strictly on the empirical evidence, the no-government solution is working out a lot better than the previous three decades of Afro-socialism.

And why wouldn't it? After all, go back to, say, mid-19th-century America: Did the central government impinge that much on the average midwesterner? Or did they just get on with things? The other week, four extremely rare identical quads were born to a Canadian mother, but they had to be delivered in a hospital in Great Falls, Mont., because there was no bed available for the young mom either in her local hospital in Calgary or in any other health facility in Canada.

After making the usual cheap jokes about socialized medicine, I received a ton of indignant e-mails from affronted Canucks: "There are literally tens of thousands of things that government tries to do and shouldn't," wrote one reader, "but health care is a fundamental of any civilized society." Really? A "fundamental"? Are you saying then that the Canada of the Fifties and Forties was not a "civilized society"? If "civilized society" is not possible without government medicine, then civilization in Canada, Britain, and the rest of the West has the shallowest of roots.

If you're thinking globally, it helps to think locally: What's happening in Mogadishu is not what's happing in Monrovia. But most of our views of "global problems" are highly parochial. The assumption behind "global warming" and "global poverty" is that Western civilization—or, at any rate, Western capitalism—is to blame. At the same time, the very same people assume that an advanced Western society is the natural endpoint of human development, at least in terms of the social issues: secularism, abortion, gay rights, and whatnot. In other words, everywhere is on a varispeed one-way railroad track to Sweden.

Or it was. *New York Times* readers must have choked on their brunch the other day when confronted with a Sunday magazine devoted to the return of "The Politics of God": "Our problems again resemble those of the 16th century," says Mark Lilla, arguing in effect that the two centuries between the French Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall were a mere Interlude of Reason, and that a traditional politics of "competing revelations" is reasserting itself. The careless presumption that our moment—the social-democratic "civilized society"—is permanent and inevitable is a delusion. The obsolescent boomer pieties that are now the core curriculum of our grade schools will be a laughingstock by the time those children graduate high school. **NR**

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